

6-13-2017

Recently Released Women's Time Spent with Mentors and Achieving Reentry Goals

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Recently Released Women's Time Spent with Mentors and Achieving Reentry Goals

Rebecca Rose Stoddard

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Science in Criminal Justice

School of Criminal Justice

May 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee for their support throughout the process of writing this thesis. Your guidance made this a rewarding learning experience and the research skills I acquired are invaluable. I would also like to thank my family for their unending encouragement.

Abstract

Within the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the local Women's Resource Center (WRC) fosters a mentoring program, New Beginnings (NB), with the goal to assist recently released jailed women to successfully reintegrate by achieving reentry goals. The following study examines how gender-responsive offender mentoring influences the success of women achieving reentry goals and reentering society. This study uses data from WRC that shows how many hours 78 mentees spent with their mentors before and after they were released from the Kent County jail and if reentry goals were met. It is hypothesized that total, pre-, and post-release hours mentors and mentees spend with each other is positively related to the achievement of reentry goals (i.e. employment, schooling, housing, sobriety, increased social capital). Furthermore, it is hypothesized that post-release hours are most influential due to mentors and mentees bonding with each other in a community setting. Results indicate that total, pre-, and post-release hours are significantly related to the achievement of reentry goals. Particularly, for every hour a mentee spends with her mentor post-release, her odds of achieving her reentry goals increase 5.5 times. Findings are consistent with social learning and social capital theory.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The word 'mentor' was first inspired by a character in Homer's *Odyssey* and since then has been historically significant across cultures. It has been used in the guru tradition practiced in Hinduism and Buddhism, the discipleship system practiced by Rabbinical Judaism and the Christian church, and apprenticeship system under the medieval guild system (Colley, 2002). The United States began utilizing mentoring during the 1970s, primarily in the workplace as advocates for workplace equity, as well as paving pathways for mentees in their careers. Mentoring has become highly popular in many advanced capitalist countries and is shown as an element of policy solutions in a wide range of contexts (Barondess, 1995). It is a key feature of initial training in public service professions such as teaching, nursing, and career guidance, as well as in the development of business managers. Mentoring has also moved to center stage in many United States' government initiatives to address social exclusion among young people in school and neighborhoods. Big Brothers Big Sisters, for example, is one of the largest national youth mentoring programs of its kind (Colley, 2002).

Whether mentors are used in the workplace, schools, or for offenders, mentoring appeals because it is personal, flexible, and transfers knowledge from those who are a "success" to those struggling to stay within the rules (Crossey, 2009). Offender mentoring has emerged as one possible approach to teach individuals the skills to succeed in society after incarceration. However, despite the intuitive belief in the good mentoring can do, critics have concerns regarding the rise of mentoring due to the lack of empirical support. This thesis examines a Grand Rapids' nonprofit organization that uses offender mentoring as a part of its program for offender reentry. The purpose of this evaluation is to analyze recently released women's time

spent with mentors in relation to their achievement of completing reentry goals. It is the hope that this study will contribute to empirical literature on mentorship and its effectiveness.

The Women's Resource Center (WRC), located in Grand Rapids, Michigan utilizes volunteer mentors to assist women with criminal backgrounds. WRC hopes this will help returning women achieve their personal goals in order to improve their quality of life. WRC's program, New Beginnings (NB), provides women who are in the Kent County Jail's female reentry pod with a female mentor from the community. Mentors are with their mentees approximately one month before the incarcerated women are released, during the difficult period of transition, and approximately one year after being released from jail. Each mentor undergoes extensive training provided by WRC staff. This training includes a weekend of workshops and general information about incarcerated women including common issues such as mental illness, substance abuse, history of physical and mental abuse, and trauma. This allows mentors to obtain the knowledge of what a successful mentor does and how to assist their mentees in a healthy manner for a successful relationship. During the last month that a mentee is incarcerated the mentor uses this time to bond, gain trust, and form a healthy relationship with their mentee. To accomplish this, mentors go into the Kent County Jail and WRC staff conducts activities for the mentors and the mentees to do together.

It is during the transition period from jail to society that mentors provide the most guidance and support. Mentees can rely on mentors to help keep appointments (such as classes at WRC), be a positive influence in their lives, and for everyday activities such as riding the bus or getting a library card. It is with this guidance and support that these once incarcerated women can achieve goals such as gaining employment, going back to school, getting housing, or expanding their social capital. Social capital refers to the networks and connections of

relationships among people who live and work in a community. Coleman (1990) emphasizes social capital as a product of relations among people. It is not in itself a tangible resource, but represents the potential to acquire resources from one's connections and interactions with others. Once the mentee has transitioned, the mentor remains as a positive support system, assisting until the mentee's goals are achieved. Once her goals are met, WRC considers the mentee has successfully completed the NB program. It is the hope of the WRC that the presence of a mentor in a recently released women's life will contribute in the reduction of female recidivism in the Grand Rapids' metropolitan area.

Background

In the context of criminal justice, Nellis (2002) defines mentoring as involving "someone more experienced guiding, coaching, or encouraging someone less experienced in the performance of a task (or role)" (p. 94). He explains that offender mentoring is usually more formal than befriending, but less formal than supervision and more purposeful than volunteering. Despite its pervasive presence in social work, little is known of the effectiveness of offender mentoring and there is far less evidence in criminology and the criminal justice sciences (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & McKinnon, 2012). Studies that have been done show that mentoring is an increasingly popular form of offender intervention but there is mixed evidence as to its effectiveness (Brown & Ross, 2010).

Of all criminal justice "interventions," mentoring remains among the least developed theoretically and empirically. Even so, offender mentoring is a form of social program intervention that is attractive to agencies involved in offender support for a variety of reasons. It gives fiscally stretched non-government organizations the capacity to leverage the services of community volunteers as a way of providing a greater range of after-care services (Brown &

Ross, 2010). Although volunteers appear to be a cost effective, they do require training, and anecdotally appear to have a higher turnover than paid mentors (Crossey, 2009). Mentoring is also appealing to agencies because it involves relatively high contact time between mentors and mentees compared to a relationship between professional support workers and their clients as those interactions are typically brief and irregular (Barry, 2000).

The current study aims to add to the knowledge of offender mentoring. It focuses on the effect of offender mentoring, as used through the New Beginnings (NB) program, and its impact on mentees' achievement of reentry goals. Ultimately, NB's goal is to have mentors provide guidance and become a positive influence to women in reentry. It is the hope of the NB program that mentors will motivate recently released mentees to better themselves and reach their personal-set goals of employment, schooling, sobriety, housing, or increased positive social capital. Moreover, it is WRC's philosophy that mentors provide empowerment and act as role models in an effort to ensure that these once incarcerated women break the cycle of reoffending.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to evaluate, using the NB program, not only if mentoring is effective for women in jail, but also if the amount of time mentees spend with their mentors determine if mentees will accomplish their individual reentry goals. This study aims to examine whether offender mentoring can be used as an avenue for successful reentry into society after incarceration. Improving the understanding of mentorship's relation to successful reentry can also impact other programs and how they assist recently released incarcerated women in their communities.

The uniqueness of the NB program is important to note because programs rarely provide mentors for women *during* incarceration (Freudenberg et al., 1998). Because of this, NB enables

a mentor to be a part of the mentee's journey from jail, transition, and life in society. The purpose of this study is to research the effects of gender-responsive mentoring which is defined for this study as: women mentoring women structured to address women's common pathways to criminality and providing effective interventions specific for women (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003). This study will examine two types of mentoring that considers women's specific needs, before and after release, with regards to women transitioning from the Kent County Jail, Michigan, to society. More specifically, did women who were mentored both in and out of jail, achieve their personal reentry goals? The study specifically delves into the aspects of the mentoring process and its influences on women in reentry which may result in accomplishing reentry goals. The following research questions will be addressed:

1. Do hours spent with a mentor predict if mentees achieve their reentry goals?
 - 1A. Are pre- and post- release hours related to achieving reentry goals?
 - 1B. Which type of mentorship (pre- or post-release hours) is more influential for predicting the achievement of reentry goals?

This study specifically delves into female incarceration in jails and the impact of gender-specific programming. In relation to achieving reentry goals, challenges for women are discussed and the incorporation of mentoring theory gives insight as to how social capital and learning theory can attain the positive outcome of reintegrating into conventional society. Examples are provided of past mentoring programs in incarcerated settings as well as an explanation of mentoring within WRC's New Beginnings program.

Using data that WRC collected and provided, this study focuses on New Beginnings' second year (2014) when the program served 87 jailed women. Thus, the current study is a secondary data analysis and uses a binary logistic regression to determine whether hours mentees

spent with their mentors is related to the achievement of mentee reentry goals. It is expected that the more time a mentee spends with her mentor, the more likely she will achieve her reentry goals and successfully complete the NB program. Implications, limitations of the study, and recommendations are provided for future research and the development of studies in the field of criminal justice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Although much literature explains the process of mentoring incarcerated persons and desired outcomes, this review focuses on how gender-specific mentoring programs affect jailed women in the process of reentry. The present literature review examines female incarceration, gender-specific incarceration programs, challenges for women upon release, mentoring theory through social capital, mentoring in practice in incarceration settings, and mentoring specifically within the New Beginnings' program.

Female Incarceration

Over the past quarter century, there has been a profound increase in the involvement of women within the criminal justice system, resulting in a disproportionate rise of female incarceration (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013, Belknap, Lynch, & DeHeart, 2016). This is due to more expansive law enforcement efforts, stiffer drug sentencing laws, and post-conviction barriers to reentry that uniquely affect women (DeHart, 2008; Reisig, Holtfreter, & Morash, 2006). Women now comprise a larger proportion of the incarcerated population than ever before; they make up 7% of all individuals under the jurisdiction of state and federal authorities (The Sentencing Project, 2015). While this is a small percentage of the corrections' population, women have been hit especially hard by the mass imprisonment movement. For example, "in the five decades from 1960 to 2011, women's rates of imprisonment increased by 14%, while men's increased by 7%" (Belknap, Lynch, & DeHeart, 2016, p. 80). Although women currently represent about 14% of the U.S. jail population, between 2010 and 2013, women's jail detention rates increased 11% while men's decreased 4% (Minton & Golinelli, 2014).

Contrary to stereotyped public perceptions, many incarcerated women are "ordinary" women who have faced extraordinary obstacles in an effort to survive in their chronically

troubled communities. For example, many incarcerated women have reportedly experienced abuse, victimization, mental health disorders, and substance abuse (Nowotny et al., 2014). The majority of incarcerated women comprise of racial and ethnic minorities, under the age of 35, and are mothers who live in low income urban neighborhoods where the rates of unemployment and under-education continue to be high (Lynch et al., 2013). Most jailed women are arrested and detained for nonviolent offenses related to drugs (Abram. Teplin, & McClelland, 2003). Additionally, surveys show that the majority of women experience victimization by family members, acquaintances, or strangers prior to incarceration (DeHart, 2008). Many women return from jail to the same neighborhoods and conditions without having received any services to address their underlying problems (Fagan & Meares, 2008). It is a result of these issues that women's needs are different compared to men in the correctional setting.

Pathways to incarceration. Until the late 1970s, it was highly unusual for scholarly studies to include women (or girls) in their samples (Belknap, 2007). Although gender is the strongest factor indicating a person's likelihood to break the law, the almost exclusively male researchers of the time rarely included women and girls in their samples. The irony is that "sex, the powerful variable regarding crime, has been virtually ignored" (Leonard, 1982, p. xi). Therefore, research concerning gender and crime is fairly recent, as well as information on women's pathways to the criminal justice system. As a result, criminologists are learning that women and girls can take on the role as both offenders and victims (Belknap, 2007).

Women's pathways to incarceration are different when compared to men, "girls' and boys' trajectories into delinquency may be partially gender specific- with gender differences in developmental processes, resulting problem behaviors, and social and official responses to troubling behaviors" (Belknap & Holsinger, 2006, p. 51). Early juvenile involvement in the

criminal justice system is highly predictive of adult involvement, especially for women (Holsinger & Ayers, 2004; Fagan & Meares, 2008). The feminist pathways approach to understanding the causes of illegal behavior emphasizes childhood abuses as significant risks for subsequent delinquency. Studies on delinquent girls and incarcerated women report victimizations and abuse much higher than the general population of women and girls (Gaarder & Belknap, 2002). Moreover, girls' reactions to abuse is relevant. The criminal justice system has been accused of criminalizing women's and girl's efforts to escape violence as they are more likely to be incarcerated for status offenses such as running away, truancy, or deemed to be in need of supervision (The Sentencing Project, 2015; Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013; Belknap & Holsinger, 2006).

Additionally, police discretion can be affected intersectionality by gender and racial bias and girls in the juvenile justice system have historically been disproportionality sanctioned for status offenses. Police are more likely to arrest a young female if she violates traditional role expectations by running away from home, being sexually active, or simply not obeying her parents (Moore & Padavic, 2010). Studies also show that race is an important factor when it comes to who is arrested, indicating that minority female youth are more often targeted by police (Brunson & Miller, 2006). More than a quarter of youths arrested every year are girls, "delinquency cases involving girls increased by 83% between 1988 and 1997, with data indicating an increase of 106% for African American girls, 74% for Anglo girls, and 102% for girls of other races" (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013, p. 69). Homelessness can result from victimization as women who run away are forced onto the streets due to poverty, loss of housing, loss of benefits, escaping from abusive intimate partners, and having mental illness and/or

substance abuse (DeHart, 2004). This environment results in the commission of crimes and a pathway into the correctional system.

Indeed, three-quarters of women who enter jails report histories of victimization and trauma, and continue to be vulnerable to victimizations within correctional settings (Correctional Association of New York, 2015). Women's engagement in criminal behavior is often related to their connections with others such as relationships with significant others, children, friends, and family as these relations are often paramount in women's lives. Exposure to dysfunctional and abusive relationships throughout their lives can elevate their risk of future victimizations and the perpetration of violence (Ney, 2014). Often, women's unhealthy relationships can lead to their own involvement in crime and consequently the criminal justice system.

Women's pathways to the correction system is also linked to mental illness. One result of the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill persons in the 1970s, as well as the war on drugs, is that more mentally ill people are found in local jails than in mental hospitals (Kim, 2016). Previous research has shown that unresolved mental health problems increase the risk of re-arrest and drug use, especially for women (Freudenberg, 2005). Indeed, incarcerated populations have a significantly higher prevalence of serious mental illness and substance use disorders than the general population (Abram, Teplin, & McClelland, 2003). "Some scholars argue that such factors have created a 'revolving door'" (Nowotny et al., 2014, p. 781).

Previous literature suggests the impact of deinstitutionalization has resulted in a decrease of police discretionary power and status type offenses as being labeled as criminal offenses (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013). Some actions constituting non-serious family conflicts have been relabeled upward as violent or assault charges. This is considered one explanation for the increase in charges and incapacitation of girls.

Even so, jails have become an institution useful in identifying people with mental health problems who are likely underserved in their community. Indeed, as individuals with mental illness serve time in jail, they are provided diagnoses and in-care treatment upon release. This can be extremely beneficial for community public health and reducing recidivism (Belknap, Lynch, & DeHart, 2016).

The levels of reported impairment, combined with the frequency of mental illness, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance use, suggest the critical need for additional resources for treatment of this population (Abram, Teplin, & McClelland, 2003). Understanding female offenders' pathways to offending, including both risk for onset and risk for continued offending, helps elucidate the complexity of this population's experiences and identify key factors and intervening variables that may exacerbate risk (Lynch et al., 2013). Research on women's pathways into the criminal justice system is critical to the development of gender-responsive programming and problem-solving initiatives. Policies, programs, and services need to respond specifically to women's pathways, in and out of crime, and the contexts of their lives that support criminal behavior (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003). Gender-responsive mentoring could assist with this because it allows women to mentor women and it is structured to address women's common pathways to criminality, while also providing effective interventions specific for women.

Gender-Responsive Programming

Until recently, young women have been largely overlooked in the development of juvenile justice policy and programs and few resources have been directed at them (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013). Indeed, as more women are incarcerated, there is a greater need for gender-responsive programming (GRP). The underlying principles of GRP recognize women's

common pathways to incarceration, including the influences of systemic race, class, and gender oppression on their lives and within the legal system. “Researchers recommend programming that incorporates components of cognitive behavioral as well as relational techniques” (Sandoval, Baumgartner, & Clark, 2016, p. 35). Bloom, Owen, and Covington (2003) highlight the criteria inclusive of gender-specific programming: First, gender-specific programs for women are structured differently from programs for male offenders. Gender-responsive practices target women’s pathways to criminality by providing effective interventions that address the intersecting issues of substance abuse, trauma, mental health, and economic marginality that are specific to women.

Second, criminal justice interventions need to address the low risk to public safety created by the typical offenses committed by female offenders. For example, studies have shown that the prevalence of convictions for criminal offences was much higher for men (44%) than for women (12%) (Farrington & Painter, 2004). Third, when delivering interventions, GRP consider women’s relationships, especially those with their children, and women’s roles in their community. An example of this can be seen through the program, “Mentoring Mums.” The Mentoring Mums program provides mentors to make home visits to vulnerable and socially isolated new mothers and their at-risk infants. The authors suggest that the program's effectiveness resides in a mentor role that shares primary values of befriending and neighborliness (Mitchell, Absler, & Humphreys, 2015). Furthermore, Mitchell, Absler, & Humphreys (2015) describes the importance Mentoring Mums had for the relationship between mother and child and the networking relationships between mother and mentor. They claim this type of relationship is more beneficial rather than mentors enacting a quasi-professional role.

Unfortunately, there are limited offerings of GRP for women inmates, and this lack of appropriate intervention may negatively impact women's recovery, possibly resulting in recidivism. Alternatively, women who participated in GRP significantly reduced their drug use over time, chose to remain in aftercare treatment for a longer period, and were less likely to be incarcerated in the future (Kissin, Tang, Campbell, Claus, & Orwin, 2014). In addition, studies consistently show a link between GRP education and lowered rates of recidivism (Vacca, 2004). Education has the capacity to be the gateway for self-achievement especially if it is conducted in such a way that it empowers students to take control of their lives; a key factor in rehabilitation. Often it is the teacher who provides an environment for growth for their student which encourages transformation (Mageehon, 2006). Mentors can act as teachers by guiding, supporting, and being a provider of tough-love during their transition.

Effective programs help those in reentry with their social skills, artistic development, and techniques and strategies to help them handle their emotions (Vacca, 2004). Data from female offender focus groups indicate if certain needs are unmet, women are at an increased risk for criminal involvement. These needs include housing, physical and psychological safety, education, job training opportunities, community-based substance abuse treatment, economic support, positive role models, and a community response to violence against women (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2003); these are all critical components of gender-responsive prevention programs. Research also shows that women offenders have a great need for comprehensive services. Comprehensive services are individual care plans with a defined process used to build constructive relationships and support networks. They are community based, culturally relevant, strength based, and family centered (Walker & Bruns, 2006). This case management approach

has been found to work effectively with women because it addresses their multiple treatment needs (Nowotny et al., 2014).

Despite the limited availability of GRP, many women voluntarily participate in those that are offered because they see clear opportunities for a smoother transition and wish to improve their capabilities for employment. Moreover, it is imperative that education for this population takes under consideration race, sex, cultural background, and different learning styles. Indeed, those in reentry need programs that provide the necessary reinforcement that promotes a positive transition to society (De Jong & Medendorp, 2015).

Richie, Freudenberg, and Page (2001) highlight the importance of considering jails as possible sites of intervention for vulnerable populations not easily reached by other service systems. They suggest that it is more likely to engage vulnerable women in jail in order to maintain contact after release more so than programs that intervene only post-release. It is also shown that although most women in jail are anxious to get out and start over, the first few days after release represent a particularly vulnerable time, “women typically pull toward substance use, abusive but familiar relationships, crime, and risky behavior” (Richie, Freudenberg, & Page, 2001, p. 292). This critical time may be more challenging for women returning to a disorganized community without adequate support. This suggests the importance of “front-loading” services into the first hours, days, and weeks after release from jail (Clancy et al., 2005). GRP can use the time of incarceration to engage women and build a trusting relationship. Once released, it is possible to take advantage of this bond and maintain it to help women through the difficult reentry process while also addressing gender-specific needs.

While there is an increase in empirical literature on the effectiveness of gender-responsive mentoring programs, most studies do not go into detail about how women

transitioning specifically from jail are impacted by mentors. Most research, concerning women reentering society from incarceration, focuses on prisons or the combination of jails and prisons, but not jails themselves. Indeed, the majority of offenders who come into contact with the corrections system do so with the local jail system. This is because jails hold people whose cases are dismissed, “20% of detainees eventually have their case dismissed or are acquitted” (Aborn & Cannon, 2013, p. 3).

Prisons and jails. Over the past three decades, the number of prison inmates in the United States has increased by more than 600%, leaving the United States with the highest incarceration rate in the world (Pager, 2003). Today, over two million people are currently incarcerated in state and federal prisons and local jails (Fagan & Meares, 2008; Pager, 2003). This is due to the “get tough on crime” political era in the 1980’s that resulted from the war on drugs, when trends in crime policy led to the imposition of harsher sentences for a wider range of offenses (Jones & Mauer, 2013). Although the United States is distancing itself from this political approach, there is still evidence of a widening net of penal intervention. While the “tough on crime” policies may have been effective in removing criminals off the streets, little provision has been made for their inevitable reintegration.

Of the two million individuals currently incarcerated, roughly 95% will be released with more than half a million being released each year (Slevin, 2000; Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). It was surmised by policymakers that raising the incarceration rate would greatly reduce the crime rate, however, no large-scale reduction in crime was detected until the mid-1990s. The failure of crime rates to decline commensurately with increases in the rate and severity of punishment reveals a paradox of punishment, “higher incarceration rates have resulted in stable, if not higher, levels of crime” (Fagan & Meares, 2008, p. 176). Further, Travis (2001) argues that

mass incarceration is counterproductive because it may have criminogenic effects on prisoners. Indeed, imprisonment not only weakens a person's access to legal work, it also strengthens connections to criminal networks (Pager, 2003).

It is important to note the distinctions between jails and prisons in relation to this study because there are numerous differences, yet the terms "jails" and "prisons" are often used interchangeably. Prisons can be run by the Federal Government, States, or privately, and typically hold felons with sentences of more than one year. Jails, on the other hand, are the entry gate to the correctional system and are run locally by counties and hold inmates awaiting trial or sentencing or a combination of both (Katz, 1998). Those incarcerated in jails are typically charged with a misdemeanor and are sentenced to a term of less than one year, as well as felons who have been charged and are awaiting transfer. Jails also hold parole and probation violators. Stability is more common in prison settings since inmates live there while jails act as a busy airport as inmates go in and out of the facility on a daily basis. As mentioned earlier, jails hold inmates who are awaiting trial or sentencing, but also hold those who will be transferred to prison after a felony conviction, a mental health facility, and people who were arrested for low level public disorder offenses (Freudenberg et al., 2005).

Due to the transient nature of the jail client (a short length of stay based on posting bond, transfer, dismissal of charges, etc.) there is a consistent turnover of inmates. Because of this, unlike prison systems, jails offer far less programming opportunities for inmates (Hilinski-Rosick & Walsh, 2017). Programming opportunities such as vocational training, education programs, and drug rehabilitation take time to complete. Even so, many jail administrators do not see the financial value of investing in rehabilitative programming.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported that the United States' county and city jails held 744,600 inmates at midyear 2014 and admitted an estimated 11.4 million persons during a 12-month period ending on June 30, 2014 (Minton & Zeng, 2015). This is a decrease from the peak of 13.6 million in 2008. Although males have made up at least 85% of the jail population since 2000, data from the BJS Annual Survey of Jails showed an increase in the female inmate population. Local jails held 109,100 females at midyear 2014, an increase from 99,700 in the peak year of 2008.

While the number of female inmates confined in county and city jails increased by 18% between midyear 2010 and 2014, the male population declined about 3% during that period (Minton & Zeng, 2015). At the local level, total bookings for the year of 2015 at the Kent County Jail in Grand Rapids, Michigan was 24,693, holding an average of 985 inmates at any given time. Twenty-six percent of the Kent County Jail's population was female in 2015 which is an increase from 21.4% in 2008 (Kent County Sheriff Department, 2015). On average, for every 1,000 inmates in the Kent County Jail, approximately 250 are women. These statistics show that jails have moved in a similar trajectory as prisons with regards to the increase of incarcerated women when the rate of incarceration has fallen for men.

A result of the overwhelming increase of women in the jail population is that complications have emerged for the substantial number of women facing release. Women undoubtedly have unique obstacles compared to men during incarceration and reentry. Many of which local agencies and scholars have only begun to understand, "As pathways *into* criminal justice involvement are gendered, so too are the pathways *out* of incarceration and back into the community" (Heidemann, Cederbaum, & Martinez, 2015). Life can be difficult for a woman how has little support when facing reentry, particularly if she has parental responsibilities. In

addition, stigma, substance use problems, and histories of victimization add to the challenges for women who are recently released from jail.

Challenges for women upon reentry. Reentry is defined as the process of leaving an incarcerated setting (jail or prison) and returning to society. If the reentry process is successful, there are benefits in terms of both public safety and the long-term integration of the ex-offender. Public safety gains are typically measured in terms of reduced recidivism (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Reintegration outcomes include increased participation in social institutions, such as the labor force, families, communities, schools, and religious institutions. The release of offenders back into their community pose two fundamentally interrelated challenges: first, how to protect the safety of the public, and second, how to foster an individual's transition from life as an offender to life as a productive citizen.

However, recently released women face many challenges during the process of reentry due to their time spent in jail. Not only does time spent incarcerated negatively affect women after release, but it also impacts families. Children experience the harshness of having a family member labeled as an offender. They must restart their lives, often in similar or worse structural circumstances than prior to their parent's incarceration (Opsal, 2011). Most children report not completing high school, having limited employment skills, and histories of substance abuse and health problems (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

The label "criminal" is not just a reflection of one's past misdeeds but can also be a prediction of future behavior and outcomes. Individuals branded "criminal" by the state struggle to escape the label. This process creates two distinct categories of people: us (non-offenders) and them (the offenders) (Maruna, 2001). This is an example of "othering," as an individual becomes mentally classified in one's mind as mildly or radically different. The others are dismissed as

being in some way less human and less worthy of respect and dignity than “the rest of us” (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Othering translates this difference into inferiority which, in turn, makes it easy to severely punish “deviant others” who are not like “us.” Becker (1963) recognizes that social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by then applying these rules to groups of people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, “deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender’” (p. 9). In this sense, community member label of deviant behavior is.

As incarcerated women begin to accept the label of “criminal” that society has placed on them, they become disenfranchised by their community. Jailed women typically have a history of victimization and also experience stigma, drug use, and have a hard time attaining housing and employment (Brown & Ross, 2010; DeHart, 2008; Flower, 2010; Kissin et al., 2014; Kruttschnitt, 2010; Lynch et al., 2013). Research suggests it is beneficial to spend time with a positive role model who can assist them in overcoming these challenges and the label, “criminal,” (Morselli, Tremblay, & McCarthy, 2006) in order to reach the goal(s) of being sober, reconnecting with family, finding housing, and employment, which present formidable challenges to successful reintegration.

Criminal history and disenfranchisement. Once released, individuals in reentry experience a strong and consistent negative effect of their time incarcerated (Nagin & Paternoster, 1994; Pager, 2003; Visher, 2007). The civil penalties imposed with a criminal conviction effectively denies those who are released the full rights of citizenship. “This denial, makes performing the duties of citizenship difficult” (Uggen, Manza, & Thompson, 2006, p. 283). Many released offenders confront legal restrictions on employment, access to public social

benefits and public housing educational benefits, and reestablishing family and community ties. It is also possible that they may lose parental rights, the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, and the right to hold public office (Schlager, 2013). Additionally, in many states, one's criminal history is public record, which is readily searchable by anyone.

Stigma. Those reentering the community face additional challenges such as the stigma of incarceration, the need to reframe their personal identities, and rebuild and form conventional relationships. However, once one's offender status is formally recognized by society, the label of "offender" is often applied. The label carries significant meaning to society and mostly negative consequences for the person for whom it is attached (Goffman, 1986). While labeling is the act of attaching a word with symbolic meaning to an individual (offender), stigma is the resulting action. Goffman explains that stigmas often develop as part of a process by which the reactions of others creates a "spoiled identity" (1963, p. 131).

This is further explained by Charles Horton Cooley's term, "the looking glass self," which characterizes a person's perception of him or herself as a reflection of how he or she appears to others (1964). Stigmas are social constructions of the collective that define normal and good, as well as bad and criminal, within the current structure and cultural boundaries of a particular society (Goffman, 1986; Maruna, 2001; Opsal, 2011). "American culture positions felons at or near the bottom rung of our social order" (Opsal, 2011, p. 137). This frames offenders as irredeemable criminals, hence, those who are released are viewed as social deviants and are regarded as fundamentally different from the rest of "us."

Furthermore, Pager (2003) explains that those who are incarcerated are institutionally branded as a particular class of individuals, as are college graduates or welfare recipients. There is a "negative credential" associated with a criminal record that represents a unique mechanism

of stratification in that it is the state that certifies particular individuals in ways that qualify them for discrimination or social exclusion. Indeed, previously incarcerated persons experience the effects of this social exclusion, or stigma, when they perceive that neighbors or other community members view them as flawed. As a result, they become aware of their diminished status in relation to others and begin to isolate themselves (Rose & Clear, 1998). Further, women who were incarcerated may have a unique experience with stigma because they can be viewed as doubly deviant. This is because community members, employers, and landlords may see them as individuals who have violated gender expectations as well as the criminal law (Opsal, 2011). A person's self-image is formed as a consequence of the attitudes others have about him or her. But Villanueva (2008) proposes that if mentors can be a part of the reentry process, they can work with their mentees to overcome the label of “offender” and educate those who are recently released in order to stop the labeling process from coming reality.

Mental illness and victimization. Histories of abuse and victimization are very closely tied to criminal activity among women offenders. Mental health problems, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), has been associated with victimization among female offenders (Sacks, 2004). Substance use and abuse are often used as a self-medicating coping strategy. “Women are more likely to report histories of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse at rates varying from 77% to 90% prior to being arrested” (Mejia, Zea, Romero, & Saldívar, 2015, p. 2). Once released, it is reported that many women return to unhealthy relationships, often due to their current financial situation (Kruttschnitt, 2010; Schlesinger & Lawston, 2011). Thus, women’s pathways to the criminal justice system are different than men’s because they are much more likely to have experienced poverty, intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual abuse, and/or other forms of victimization that are linked to their offending behavior.

Women facing reentry are also much more likely to have co-occurring disorders, particularly, substance abuse problems interlinked with trauma or mental illness which results in a higher risk of incarceration (Ney, 2014). The most current and widely used definition of co-occurring disorders (COD) is the “presence of one or more disorders related to drug and/or alcohol use in conjunction with one or more mental disorder” (Sacks, 2004, p. 449). During the past 30 years, in part due to deinstitutionalization, the criminal justice system has become a repository for a large number of individuals with COD who are arrested for a wide range of crimes (Abram, Teplin, & McClelland, 2003; Swartz & Lurigio, 2007). Indeed, for the mentally ill, substance use is a common pathway into the criminal justice system. Examples of crimes generated by substance use include the commission of income-generating crimes, such as theft, burglary, and robbery to support the purchase of drugs. This exacerbates psychiatric symptoms leading to arrests for public nuisance offenses such as disturbing the peace. Also, the use of certain drugs, such as cocaine and heroin, is illegal and is an offense in its own right (Swartz & Lurigio, 2007). Although Jails are legally required to provide mental health care that meets accepted standards of practice, administrators strain to attend to the care and safety of the mentally ill due to practical challenges (Lurigio & Fallon, 2007).

In the past decade, studies in jails and prisons have identified an increasing number of men and women entering the criminal justice system with COD. For example, in a population of female state prisoners in Arizona, 86% were found to have at least one substance use disorder and 94% evidenced significant psychological distress at the time of their arrest (Heffernan, Finn, Saunders, & Byrne, 2003). In another study including a randomly selected stratified sample of female arrestees awaiting trial at the Cook County Department of Corrections in Chicago, nearly

three-quarters of the 1,272 female jail detainees with current severe mental disorders (i.e. major depression and bipolar disorder) had COD (Abram, Teplin, & McClelland, 2003).

Furthermore, Richie (1995) highlights how women are often blamed for being poor and battered, yet they are penalized and criminalized for both. Richie proposes that this is set up intentionally to serve the dominant patriarchal social structure, a pattern she refers to as *gender entrapment*. Victims of gender entrapment are primarily women of color from low-income communities where poverty has come to symbolize legislative and government neglect. “The result is that they are labeled criminals rather than victims of a crime or citizens entitled to public support” (Richie, 1995, p. 38). According to Richie (1995), it can be said that most women of color in urban communities, who live in poverty, are set up to fail and are then blamed for failing.

Another serious and prevalent form of victimization among incarcerated women is physical and sexual abuse. Sexual victimization is defined as penile-vaginal rape, anal and oral rape, molestation, sexual harassment, attempted rape, and sexual assault with foreign objects (Belknap, 2007). In the criminal justice system, it is reported that three in four incarcerated women experience severe physical violence by an intimate partner (Mejia, Zea, Romero, & Saldívar, 2015). Incarcerated women are at least twice as likely as women in the general public to report childhood histories of physical or sexual abuse and 90% of incarcerated women have reportedly endured physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes (Schlesinger & Lawston, 2011). Many times women who have experienced childhood victimization resort to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs as a coping mechanism to numb the pain of prior victimization. Thus, there is a strong interconnection between victimization, mental illness (depression, anxiety, and PTSD), and self-medicating substance abuse behaviors (Nowotny, Belknap, Lynch, & DeHart, 2014).

Substance abuse. There has long been concern in the criminal justice system, at both the federal and state levels, regarding drug use and its disproportionate contribution to theft, prostitution, robbery, and other crimes (Akers, 1992). Income-producing crimes are associated with drugs because addicts need to resort to crime to pay for their habits (DeBeck et al., 2007). Additionally, alcohol and other substances have a direct pharmacological effect that either reduces inhibitions toward, or induces violent behavior (Thomson, 2017). Indeed, drugs/alcohol and crime are highly related (Akers, 1992).

Substance abuse and chemical dependency has been consistently reported as major contributing factors with the increasing population of women offenders (Kissin et al., 2014; Nowotny et al., 2014; Sacks, 2004; Swartz & Lurigio, 2007). Women constitute a rapidly growing sector of the incarcerated population, primarily because of increases in the number of drug-related arrests (Freudenberg et al., 1998). Many women offenders, reported as high as 98%, have a history of substance abuse and nearly half of incarcerated women indicate that they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of their offense (Staton-Tindall, Royes, and Leukfeld, 2007). One survey of male and female offenders indicates that a higher percentage of females reported drug use, including lifetime use, regular use, and use at the time of their offense, compared to male offenders (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). As a result, women offenders have a number of health problems which are related to their risky drug use and sexual behavior prior to incarceration.

Research on substance abuse has found that “addiction is a brain disease” (Leshner, 1997, p. 45). Indeed, inmates returning to their old neighborhood and friends place them at high risk for relapse. This is because familiar places and people may act as a trigger to their brain and heighten cravings (Kissin et al., 2014). Helping to smooth this transition, through connections to

community-based treatment immediately upon release, could reduce the likelihood of recidivism and the resumption of drug use (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

In a stratified random sample of 100 incarcerated women in one Kentucky prison, Staton-Tindall, Royes, and Leukfeld (2007) utilized face-to-face interviews and found that more severe use of alcohol and drugs are related to decreased perceptions of social support and decreased social networks among incarcerated women. In addition, they found a modest relationship between criminal involvement and lack of social support. Specifically, incarceration at an earlier age is related to a decreased social network among incarcerated women. Overall, the findings suggest that the degree to which women perceive social support may not be strongly influenced by their criminal involvement, but rather by the amount of time they are incarcerated and separated from family and friends (Staton-Tindall, Royes, and Leukfeld, 2007).

Housing and transportation. An often overlooked challenge facing individuals who are recently released is the issue of obtaining housing. Indeed, one of the first things an offender must do upon release is find a place to live. Housing presents problems for several reasons: First, returning offenders rarely have the financial resources or personal references necessary to compete and secure housing in the private housing market. Additionally, federal laws ban ex-prisoners from public housing and some are not welcome back by relatives to their family home. Due to these issues, some returning inmates end up homeless (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

In 1996, Congress amended the public housing statute with a “one strike and you’re out” option that excluded applications with a criminal record (24 C.F.R. § 966.4). As a result, women offenders have few options for providing a safe, secure, and affordable place for their children to live. Finding “safe” housing where women can live and support their children is very challenging as public housing is the more viable option for recently released women. Section 8 providers,

and other assisted housing programs, have the right to deny housing to individuals who have engaged in certain criminal activities. The guidelines for denying housing are broad and may encompass those who have at any point in the past engaged in drug related activity, violent criminal activity, or other criminal activity that would negatively affect the health and safety of other residents (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Housing authorities also have the right to obtain criminal records on tenants and applicants.

Therefore, between 25-50% of women attempting to reintegrate experience high rates of homelessness the month after incarceration (Lutze, Rosky, & Hamilton, 2014). According to Schram et al. (2006), housing instability is a risk factor for parole and probation revocation and those who reported having an unstable housing situation increased their odds of failure during parole/probation.

Another issue for women that the reentry process poses is transportation because many do not own a vehicle and therefore, must rely on others. This limits access to community-based health systems, which many times are not located in their neighborhood or close to public transportation routes. Thus, lack of access to transportation is a key barrier to treatment and also employment.

One option for those who are recently released is to stay with family members after incarceration. However, there is some evidence to suggest that among the many who do, such arrangements are often short-lived solutions (Desmond & Bell, 2015). One reason for this is that family members living in public housing may not welcome a returning offender home when doing so may put their own housing situation at risk. Some familial relationships may also be so severely strained and tenuous that staying with family members or friends is not a viable option.

Although homeless shelters may be a last resort for many former offenders in need of housing, it is not always available. All federally funded shelters require that individuals be homeless for at least 24 hours before they are eligible for a bed (Lutze, Rosky, & Hamilton, 2014). Also, shelters with limited bed space may be reluctant to house ex-offenders. Providing access to affordable housing options that will aid the transition back to the community may be an important factor in relapse prevention. The period immediately following release, when a returning prisoner may be most tempted to fall back into old habits, is critical (Rossi, 1989). Indeed, the initial barriers to finding affordable and stable housing are similar to those for finding employment.

Employment. In general, the majority of female offenders are economically marginalized and face substantial challenges when they return to the community after a period of incarceration. These challenges impede efforts to obtain and maintain employment. “Women offenders are both underemployed and unemployed, work fewer hours, and make less per hour” (Flower, 2010, p. 4). The ability to find a stable and adequate source of income upon release from incarceration is an important factor in an individual’s transition from prison back to the community. In fact, studies have shown that having a job with decent wages is associated with lower rates of reoffending (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Because female offenders often come from more disadvantage and traumatic backgrounds compared to male offenders, many women who are criminally involved often lack high educational attainment and functional literacy skills, thus impeding employment opportunities (Flower, 2010). As a result, many women in reentry lack the education and vocational skills to compete in the labor market. Therefore, women report greater levels of poverty and less employment history immediately preceding incarceration compared to men

(Reisig, Holtfreter, & Morash, 2006). There are several reasons why incarceration reduces the employability and subsequent earning potential of released inmates. First, the stigma attached to incarceration makes it difficult for those in reentry to garner employment. Employers are reluctant to hire individuals with a criminal record because it signals that they may not be trustworthy (Bushway, Stoll, & Weiman, 2007).

Furthermore, employers are reluctant to hire ex-offenders due to the perceived risk of continued engagement in criminal behavior (Pager, 2003). State legislatures and Congress made it even more difficult by banning certain people from employment based solely on the existence of a criminal record (Kruttschnitt, 2010). These occupations include financial institutions, the medical field, pharmacy, home health care, transportation, and the personal service industry (Flower, 2010). Unfortunately, these barriers pose concerns for women because these occupations could be well suited for female offenders as they offer flexible hours, allow women to work part-time, and enable more time to care for children (Pager, 2003; Bushway, Stoll, & Weiman, 2007).

Additionally, time out of the labor market interrupts individuals' job experience and prevents those who are incarcerated from building important employment skills (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). While incarcerated, offenders are exposed to that environment's culture that frequently serves to strengthen links to gangs and the criminal world in general. Therefore, obtaining a stable job may inhibit crime because prosocial values increase as "proper" work habits are developed, "day-to-day discipline required by employees improves the employee's sense of worth and self-esteem" (Flower, 2010, p. 7).

In addition to reducing the risk of recidivism, employment also helps establish a daily routine, a sense of satisfaction in a job well done, and the ability to provide for loved ones. Thus,

employment plays a vital role in an individual's ability to conform to "familial and communal roles" and enhances the development of prosocial community ties (Flower, 2010). This is important because ex-offenders who engage in informal social control established through the bonds of family, work, or community members are more likely to desist from crime (Farrall, Bottoms, & Shapland, 2010). Informal social control is the reaction of individuals and groups that bring about conformity for norms. Examples of this includes peer and community pressure, bystander intervention in a crime, and collective responses such as citizen patrol groups.

Sampson and Laub (1993) believe that adults, regardless of delinquent background, are inhibited from committing crime to the extent that they have social capital invested in their work and family lives. They go on to emphasize that there is a reciprocal nature of social capital invested by employers as they take a chance to hire workers, hoping their investment will pay off. This investment triggers a return investment in social capital by the employee as they desire to prove themselves.

Incarceration is associated with limited future employment opportunities and earning potential, which themselves are among the strongest predictors of recidivism (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Pager, 2003). Indeed, research indicates that offenders who can obtain and maintain employment recidivate less frequently and are better able to navigate the reentry process (Schlager, 2013). Work serves as a turning point, or transition, in the life course and contributes to desistance from crime, as do other life events such as marriage or having a child. Even so, lack of education, nonexistent work experience, and stigma makes finding a job extremely difficult for individuals involved in the reentry process. Most resort to their networks (family and friends) to find a job. In a similar fashion, the mentorship relationship can be used to seek out employers by using the mentor's networks as well as using the mentor as a professional reference. It is

possible that this added factor can help increase the odds of garnering employment for those in reentry.

Scholarly literature further suggests that vocation and work programs provide individuals with a more optimistic outlook. There is some evidence that suggests that involvement in job training and placement programs can lead to employment and lower recidivism. On average, participants in vocational programs are more likely to garner employment following release and report a recidivism rate 20% lower than non-participants (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Indeed, employment is the main goal for the majority of recently released women (Heidemann, Cederbaum, & Martinez, 2015). Considering that many released women are mothers, the best chance a mother has of getting her child back from government agencies after being incarcerated is by becoming employed. Indeed, employment proves she is financially responsible to take care of her children and has the means to do so. The separation of child and mother is indeed a hardship during incarceration and many women are eager to make up for lost time.

Parenting. Transition and reentry from jail to the community can be especially challenging for women because of their overwhelming needs. More than 66,000 women incarcerated in jails and prisons nationwide are mothers to minor children (Wilder Research, 2013). Women are more likely than men to be single parents and have primary child-rearing responsibilities such as promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of the child (Christian, 2009). More than five million children, representing 7% of all U.S. children, have had a parent who lived with them go to jail or prison, and according to Murphey & Cooper (2015), this is an underestimate.

One clear consequence of incarceration is that relationships with families and the broader community are strained. Parental incarceration has been linked to poor mental and physical health, behavioral problems, homelessness, grade retention, body mass index, harsh parenting, and material hardship for children as they enter adulthood (Katz, 1998; Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001; Wakefield & Wildeman, 2016). There are obvious difficulties in maintaining parent-child relationships during the period of incarceration and many assume that incarcerated women are unfit mothers and their children are better off without them (Solinger, 2010). It was also found that incarceration is most unambiguously important because it breaks up married or cohabiting families, increasing the likelihood of divorce and separation (Wakefield & Wildeman, 2016). On a more basic level, those who are incarcerated are less able to contribute to their families.

However, a growing body of research suggests that children with incarcerated parents may actually achieve better outcomes when they are able to maintain some type of positive contact with their mother (Opsal, 2011; Wilder Research, 2013). Jails, unlike prisons, are local institutions that allow children to stay connected with their incarcerated parents. The advantage of scheduled jail visits and phone calls allow children to maintain their relationship with their parent throughout their incarceration while also increasing the chances of reentry success of mothers (Kruttschnitt, 2010).

In fact, research shows that children act as a catalyst for positive change in women offenders. “Being responsible for children often serves to put a break on a parent’s destructive behavior, including drug use and illegal activities. Once the break is removed, destructive behavior accelerates” (Kruttschnitt, 2010, p. 38). Because women are traditionally primary care-

givers, the likelihood of family separation, such as a child placed in foster care or uprooting from their home, is greater compared to paternal incarceration.

The chances of reunification hinge not only on the degree to which women are seen as “adequate parents,” but also the degree to which they can provide a stable environment for their children. Studies have shown that reunification varies across locale. For example, a foster care system in Minnesota had 3,100 children out of its 5,031 placements (61.7%) due to parental incarceration. Of those children, 2,238 (72.2%) were reunified with their parents (Larson & Swanson, 2008). On the other hand, a study of mothers incarcerated in Illinois state prisons and the Cook County Jail from 1990 to 2000, found that incarcerated mothers had a 20% chance of reunification with their children in foster care compared to non-incarcerated mothers who had a 40% chance of reunification with their children who were also in foster care (Moses, 2006).

The role parents play in the development of their children’s lives and the potential impact of a parent-child separation due to incarceration highlight the need to find ways to help families keep in touch during incarceration and reunite upon release. However, maintaining these relationships between parents and between a parent and child during a period of incarceration can be difficult. Obstacles identified by the Women’s Prison Association include costs of visits, inadequate information on visiting procedures, little help from correctional facilities about visiting arrangements, visiting procedures that are uncomfortable or humiliating, and concerns about children’s reactions to in-prison visits (Katz, 1998). These circumstances can easily strain relationships between parents and their children.

Nonetheless, there are situations in which families are better off without a neglectful or abusive parent or partner in their lives. Some individuals are better served by not returning to a family environment characterized by substance abuse, criminal behavior, and other negative

influences that could act as triggers of past behaviors and habits (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Mentoring Theory

For most of the 21st century, criminologists have acknowledged the importance of communities in explaining crime rates and activating processes of social control (Fagan & Meares, 2008). Establishing and receiving support from healthy relationships with other adults can be imperative in a woman's life as she navigates the challenges of the transition from jail to the community. A mentoring relationship with another adult can serve as a place of solace and safety while also providing practice for a non-competitive relationship in which there is a mutual desire to promote each other's well-being and success (Brown & Ross, 2010). This can be especially meaningful to women who have a history of negative relationships. Offender mentoring can facilitate the creation of positive social capital and provide social support during the transition process.

Just as criminal behavior can be learned through interactions with intimate personal groups, social structure can also be learned and shape an individual's behavior (Akers, 1994). Social learning theory explains that the society and community, as well as class, race, gender, religion, and other structures in society, provide general learning contexts for individuals. Family, peer groups, schools, churches, and other groups provide more immediate contexts that promote or discourage criminal or conforming behavior of the individual.

This can especially be true if the individual shares certain commonalities with social groups. For example, if a woman in reentry learns from a woman who was incarcerated in the past and experienced reentry, she is more likely to identify herself closely with that person in an effort to reform anticriminal behavior (LeBel, 2007). "It would help these women to have

someone provide guidance for them, particularly someone who has been through the system and been successful in moving past the continuous modes of control that continue long after the woman has committed her crime and served her time for that crime” (Mageehon, 2006, p. 154). Cressey (1995) calls this process “retroflexive reformation.” Group participants often emphasize that their experiences come from “having been there too” and they have the knowledge and skills gained from these experiences which can be taught to others to improve their lives (Maruna, 2001; LeBel, 2007). Indeed, many prisoners and former prisoners express a desire to receive mentoring from formerly incarcerated persons who are “making it” in conventional society in order to learn from their experiences (Richie, Freudenberg, & Page, 2001; Sowards, O’Boyle, & Weissman, 2006).

Another form of mentoring theory is highlighted through Sampson and Laub’s (1993) research on social bonds. Social bonds, such as family, work, and community, tie individuals to institutions of informal social control to reduce deviant behavior by increasing one’s investment or stake in conventional society. Sampson and Laub (1993) emphasize that the quality or strength of social ties has a profound impact on adult deviance. For example, employment alone does not increase social control but “employment coupled with job stability, job commitment, and mutual ties to work increase social control and lead to a reduction in criminal and deviant behavior” (p. 140). Indeed, a meaningful career characterized by these three attributes is essential for desistance of crime.

Social Capital. Sampson and Laub further argue that social investment, or social capital in the institutional relationship, whether it involves a family, work, or community setting, dictates the salience of informal social control at the individual level. As previously mentioned, Coleman (1988) defines social capital as “the structure of relations among people that are

capable of producing resource exchange or make possible the achievement of certain ends” (p. 98). Social capital is a product of relations among people and represents the potential to acquire resources from one’s connections and interactions with others (Coleman, 1990). The distinguishing feature of social capital lies in the structure of interpersonal relations and institutional linkages. Therefore, social capital is a central factor in facilitating effective ties that bind a person to societal institutions. Whereas lack of social capital is one of the primary features of weak social bonds.

Indeed, social capital fosters the processes by which behavioral norms are set and regulated and by which they are transmitted from one generation to the next within families and across kinship and social networks (Rose & Clear, 1998). Deficits in social capital are symptomatic of communities with limited social networks and weak cohesion among their residents, thus, ties are necessary to exchange social capital. But developed social controls, such as mentoring relationships, provide important gateways for connections to the wider society through jobs, social ties, and friendship networks (Fagan & Meares, 2008). As offenders achieve their expectations for intimate relationships, their individual lives are enhanced through involvement in interlocking networks of commitments and obligations that offer support for child care, job prospects, and rewarding social interactions.

Social ties in adulthood from work, family and community, explain changes in criminality over the life course. Sampson & Laub (1990) contend that social interaction with adult institutions of informal social control, such as social ties, human agency, and routine activities, have important effects on crime and deviance as it influences criminal behavior over the life course, despite an individual’s delinquent and antisocial background. According to Sampson and Laub, crime and deviance result when an individual’s bond to society is weak or

broken but “changes that strengthen social bonds to society in adulthood can lead to less crime and deviance” (1990, p. 611).

Offender mentoring has the capacity to provide social capital through healthy relationships for women reentering society. Social capital is enhanced as the level of trust between people develop through interactions, “it is a stock of trust, goodwill or generosity, mutual understanding, and shared values that bind networks and enable cooperative action” (Kay & Wallace, 2009, p. 421). In other words, mentors can act as an avenue for networks and resources to accomplish positive outcomes.

Additionally, the status of the mentoring relationship can also be beneficial to careers; social capital is thought to be more valuable in overcoming challenges as it provides routes for developing professional skills through mentoring relationships (Kay & Wallace, 2009). Research shows that results from mentoring relationships increased communication skills, expanded viewpoints, and allowed mentees to consider alternative ways of approaching situations (Nagin & Paternoster, 1994). “Social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible” (Coleman, 1988, p. 98). Research also suggests that investment in such relationships, including mentoring relationships, creates outstanding obligations that can be drawn upon in the future in the furtherance of one’s goals (Coleman, 1988). Mentors may be useful, for example, in assisting mentees to get into a desired college or obtaining a job. Indeed, established emotional connections to others complement the crime-deterrent effect of conventional commitments.

This is not suggesting that recently released women did not have social capital prior to incarceration. In fact, some forms of social capital facilitate certain actions that may be useless or harmful to others, such as crime (Coleman, 1988). It is likely that women who served time in jail

have associated themselves with individuals who have committed crimes themselves (Reisig, Holtfreter, & Morash, 2006). As a result, released inmates engage in the same behaviors and relationships that led to their offending in the first place. In an effort to counter these harmful relationships, positive social capital comes about through changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action. Indeed, individuals who do not have positive supportive relationships are more likely to engage in criminal behavior (Jones, 2008). Thus, gender-responsive mentoring places a supportive role model in a recently released woman's life in order to disrupt the cycle of incarceration.

Social capital & gender-responsive programs. Once released, gender-responsive programs allow participants to begin the process of expanding to larger social networks in order to build the social capital needed to succeed in the long term (Flower, 2010). This is much-needed as women reentering society generally have less social and human capital. Human capital are the skills, knowledge, and abilities possessed by an individual and is viewed in terms of their value or cost to one's community (Coleman, 1990). Low human capital disrupts kinship ties and reduces social capital overall, particularly when women are returning to communities that do not have established forms of capital (Rose & Clear, 1998). There is, in fact, an inverse relationship between social support and negative coping mechanisms with stressful events. "Relationships and social support have unique importance for women; unstable social support systems contribute to the initiation and continued involvement in problem behaviors like substance abuse and criminal activity" (Staton-Tindall, Royes, & Leukfeld, 2007, p. 45).

Further, in an analysis of the Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois, Walsh (2013) argues that community-based social capital can be difficult in practical manners. "Community-based investment of social capital within neighborhoods and residents who contribute the greatest

toward the local correctional population requires the inclusion of public institutions outside of the consent decree as full-time active problem solvers” (p. 150). This suggests that there needs to be a conglomerate of criminal justice institutions working with community programs. This would result in a holistic investment that strengthens the formal and informal social controls necessary for individuals to avoid jail.

One challenge with this approach from an implementation standpoint is that the levels of social capital must work in unison. “It is not enough to increase parochial-level investment and ignore the public and private levels of investment” (Walsh, 2013, p. 145). In addition, rigorous process and outcome evaluations of programs must be implemented to identify what works, what does not work, and which programs are promising. Because there is so little research on the effects of offender mentoring with regards to women released from jail, more evaluations are needed to inform agencies on its successfulness. Also, investment in social capital development is subject to an ever-changing political economy. Sustained investment is integral to long-term success, especially if programs are offered by non-profit organizations, like WRC.

Mentoring in Incarcerated Settings

Offender mentoring is the process of matching up an individual who has a stable educational, professional, and personal life with an incarcerated individual who is in need of guidance in those areas. Mentoring may be effective because it provides a relatively intense relationship based on substantial periods of contact that can take place over long periods. The nature of the mentoring relationship, including its voluntary nature and the way that the relationship emulates a “normal” friendship, may also give it legitimacy in a way that professional worker-client relationships are lacking (Brown & Ross, 2010). If the relationship is established on the basis of respect and support, the mentee will wish to retain the mentor’s

approval and attention and will ultimately see the social and personal values modeled by the mentor as important and worth striving for (Miller et al., 2013).

Incarceration can be viewed as an opportunity to improve inmates' skills, treat their addictions, and prepare them for life on the outside. There is some evidence that incarceration programs are cost-effective and beneficial in preparing inmates for life outside the corrections system. However, recent surveys indicate that relatively few inmates receive treatment or training while incarcerated (Travis, Solomon, & Maul, 2001). Even so, experts are increasingly, albeit cautiously, optimistic about the effectiveness of certain programs at changing behavior. It seems that certain therapeutic programs, such as cognitive skills, drug treatment, vocational training, and educational programs, are successful at reducing recidivism (Sherman et al., 2002; Travis, Solomon, & Maul, 2001). These therapeutic interventions are most effective when programs are matched to offender risks and needs and when the intervention is supported through post-release supervision.

Critical review of offender mentoring. Although mentoring in incarcerated settings is theoretically sound, some critics propose that there is not enough empirical evidence to support the effectiveness of offender mentoring (Brown & Ross, 2010; Crossey, 2009; Miller, Barnes, Miller, & McKinnon, 2012; Sherman et al., 2002). Indeed, the majority of past research studies on offender mentoring centers around juvenile and school-based research. Most reports focus on young people, particularly adolescents, in school settings. This is in line with subjects such as school bullying. Unfortunately, school-based research has been described as having limited value in the criminal justice environment. Therefore, it is fair to point out that there have been very few studies on the effectiveness of offender mentoring schemes with or without regard to reducing

re-offending (Crossey, 2009). Furthermore, studies that analyze the mentoring of offenders tend to be comparative in nature rather than evaluative (Sherman et al., 2002).

One study did find that offender mentoring did in fact show benefits (Gelstjrope, Sharpe, & Roberts, 2007). It was reported that even if a mentee did not complete the mentoring program, there were still reported positive gains. Some benefits included improved literacy, numeracy, and family relationships. However, mentoring was not as successful if a mentee was abusing drugs. It was also found that mentoring that engaged mentees who were younger, had a lack of offending history, and were female (particularly when engaged with female mentors) were most successful at completing the mentoring program. Empirical literature suggests that mentoring appears to be a promising intervention on several levels, but when delivered to a high standard (Barry, 2000; De Jong & Medendorp, 2015; Kay & Wallace, 2009; Morselli, Tremblay & McCarthy, 2006). Most importantly, it was found that areas in which mentoring was most effective was when mentees were women who have a limited criminal history and had support finding employment (Crossey, 2009).

Even so, scholarly authors conclude that mentoring is a promising, but not proven, intervention (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & McKinnon, 2012; Sherman et al., 2002). One of the limitations that authors note concerning offender mentoring is publication bias where “results may be biased because there is a greater tendency for statistically significant findings to be published compared to non-statistically significant ones” (Crossey, 2009). There is evidence that research on offender mentoring is guilty of this because researchers and policy makers want mentoring to work. Thus, researchers do not publish studies that find mentoring ineffective. As a result, the majority of findings published about mentoring is optimistic. Another methodological

issue that presents itself is that there is a distinct lack of longitudinal approaches. This questions the validity of offender mentoring as it is problematic with cross-sectional research designs.

Mentor roles and perceptions. Ideal mentors model acceptable behavior as mentees receive support and guidance in a range of settings. Mentors often express gaining a new perspective on life and feel they are giving something back to society through their mentoring (Villanueva, 2008). For a formerly incarcerated woman in reentry, an offender mentoring relationship can provide new tools to approach everyday activities such as navigating public transportation, asking for help in a department store, or rescheduling an appointment. Indeed, a mentor's support can help a recently released woman develop confidence as she navigates the myriad of challenges, small and large, that come with returning to the community after incarceration (Visher, 2007). While a problem-focused and goal-oriented mentoring program may be appealing to men, women tend to seek mentoring relationships in which they feel safe and can form interpersonal relationships that serve as a basis for support (Villanueva, 2008).

Studies have shown that strong relationships that existed prior to incarceration are not always positive. Such relationships are typically marked with troubles and abuse. However, if women shift toward more positive relationships after incarceration, or during their incarcerated period, there is an increase of resources available important for reentry success. In addition, relationships with law-abiding individuals help those in reentry avoid the influences of criminal networks (Crow & Smykla, 2014).

One report of a mentoring program that assisted hundreds of women transitioning from an Australian jail back to their communities reported that personal mentoring for jailed women is “the key” to reducing reoffending rates. Stewart and Sheldon (2016) found that in the course of one year, 93% of women who took part in the program, and were linked with a mentor, did not

recidivate or return to custody, meaning that only 7% of women recidivated. Mentees from the program mentioned they found value in that their mentors had “no judgment” and that an offender ends up “not wanting to let your mentor down” (Stewart & Sheldon, 2016, p. 3). It is theorized that this approach is successful because mentors are perceived by offenders to be separate from the criminal justice system, and therefore, are more likely to engage in a relationship with them (Crossey, 2009).

The moment of release. The “moment of release” from incarceration, and the hours and days that follow, may be quite pivotal with regards to the transition back to community life. Following the release from incarceration, inmates are moved directly from a very controlled environment to a low level of supervision, or complete freedom. Those who are recently released may immediately be exposed to high-risk places, persons, and situations, and few have developed relapse prevention skills during their incarceration to deal with these risks (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Those facing release often report feeling anxious about reestablishing family ties, finding employment, and managing finances once they return to their communities (Frueденberg et al., 2005).

The heightened stress levels among inmates who are faced with release stem from anxieties about everyday problems, whether related to interpersonal relationships or financial pressures, that did not exist for the inmates while incarcerated. Previous studies have demonstrated that returning citizens tend to cope with everyday problems in ineffective and sometimes destructive ways (Zamble & Porporino, 1988). However, there has been little systematic attention paid by correction agencies and communities on ways to reduce the risks associated with release and the transition back into the community. Indeed, most prisoners are released with little more than a bus ticket and a nominal amount of spending money.

Furthermore, some recently released women may not fully understand the criminal justice system requirements they need to fulfill in order to be successful in the community (Pogrebin et al., 2014).

Thus, release and the transition from incarceration to the community presents opportunities for policy innovation in order to develop strategies that build a short-term bridge during this immediate transition period. Currently, released inmates encounter few resources to help them secure employment, access substance-abuse treatment, and reestablish family and community ties. However, the combination of pre-release preparations coupled with follow-up on the outside (via parole, nonprofit community organizations, faith institutions, family, or friends) might reduce the risk of recidivism or drug relapse and improve the odds of successful reintegration (Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001).

Post-release mentoring. Research is scarce with regards to post-release offender mentoring as most studies focus on mentoring in incarcerated settings. This study aims to provide insight on the effectiveness of mentoring after incarceration. As previously mentioned, this can be important for policy and the increase of reentry success. Given the literature this review presents, it can be suggested that post-release offender mentoring has the capability to be an avenue for a smoother transition from jail to conventional society.

Conclusion

This study fills an important gap in the literature by addressing how women transitioning from jail are impacted by the amount of time spent with mentors. Research to date focuses on prisons, or the combination of jails and prisons, but not jails themselves. The current study uses existing data obtained by WRC to examine the number of hours spent with a mentor, pre- and post-release, and the likelihood of women in reentry achieving their reentry goals. Examining the

amount of time that women spend with their mentors in the NB program, in relation to achieving reentry goals, can allow similar programs to improve their services to better assist women reentering society.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Data for this study was generated and collected by WRC staff from the New Beginnings (NB) program. Therefore, the methodological approach of this study is a secondary data analysis. Mentoring within the NB program, the process of how data was obtained, and the structure of the offender mentoring program are discussed. NB data was analyzed through SPSS using a binary logistic regression model. The following chapter describes the rationale for the application of specific procedures and techniques used to identify, select, and analyze data to answer the research questions and formulate the study's hypotheses.

Mentoring Within the New Beginnings Program

The New Beginnings (NB) program is federally funded from a grant which provides gender-responsive offender mentoring services pre-and post-release for up to 18 months for women incarcerated at the Kent County Jail in Grand Rapids, Michigan. WRC staff deliver reentry focused case management to mentees. Mentoring provided by a female adult from the local community of Grand Rapids begins relatively a few months prior to the release of the mentee. WRC holds the belief that mentors can provide a source of pro-social support. Participants (mentees) of the program set reentry goals for themselves to achieve upon release into the community. WRC requires three or four goals for mentees to strive to achieve, with one goal being continuing mentoring post-release as the grant required this goal.¹ Other examples of goals are: Gain employment, find housing, continue therapy, stay sober, and reunify with children. Thus, NB's program success is defined as meeting 75% or more of reentry goals (De Jong & Medendorp, 2014). WRC itself is interested in the improvement of the program to

¹ By WRC requiring continued mentoring as one of the goals mentees strive to achieve, this presents a tautology where the independent variable is also part of what is measured in the dependent variable.

continue addressing the recidivism rate of participants in the program and the city of Grand Rapids.

In terms of in-custody mentoring programs, continuity of contact with program members (especially volunteer mentors) “through the gate” is found to be significantly associated with lower reconviction rates (Clancy et al., 2005). One important factor is that mentors who already establish a positive relationship with an individual in custody can continue that relationship after release. Indeed, the earlier the mentoring process begins with incarcerated inmates, the more likely the mentor will maintain in contact with the individual post-release, resulting with an increase in the program’s effectiveness (Crossey, 2009). Moreover, once mentees are released, it is important for the mentoring process to continue in the community because mentors can assist with the difficult period of transition as well as life outside incarceration. While in the community, mentors act as an avenue to conventional society, which can increase the likelihood of mentees achieving their reentry goals and not reoffending.

One aspect of the NB program that should be addressed are the employment and life skill classes that mentees are required to attend during their incarceration. The NB program has two components; mentoring and the employment and life skill classes but this study focuses on the mentoring aspect of NB. Even so, because mentees receive life skill training, it is important to acknowledge. Due to many recently released female offenders experiencing challenges with tasks associated with daily life, NB focuses on life skills management in order to overcome such challenges through the employment skill classes. Some common components of the employment skill class that mentors can assist with include: Life skills, budgeting, interpersonal relationships, conflict resolution, cultural diversity, anger and stress management, decision making, and particularly job readiness skills and goal achievement.

However, studies have shown that there is insufficient evidence to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of life skills training programs (Sherman et al., 2002). Indeed, no studies have reported significant differences in recidivism rates between experimental and control groups with regards to life skills training. In fact, some studies have shown an increase in recidivism while others reported a decrease (Melton & Pennell, 1998; Ross, Fabiano, & Ewles, 1988; Miller, 1997; Austin, 1997).

Process. Data was obtained by NB in 2014. Every participant in the program is invited to be a part of NB while they are incarcerated and many volunteer to do so. The incarcerated women fill out an information sheet that includes personal and demographic information (name, age, race), criminal history, as well as mental and physical health. Mentors, on the other hand, are volunteers from the community and vary in age, race, and criminal history. WRC reaches out to potential mentors through ads in local newspapers and referrals. Once accepted, every mentor attends a day long training conducted by a NB coach who gives detailed information about mentors' roles.

The beginning of a mentor's and mentee's relationship is more structured because the mentee is incarcerated at this point in the program. Mentors join a NB coach in the Kent County Jail once a week and participate in group activities with mentees. WRC's intention for this is so mentors and mentees can build trust between each other and form a healthy and trustful relationship.

Before mentees are released from the Kent County Jail they meet with a NB coach, as well as their mentor, and set personal goals for themselves that they agree to strive for while they are in the program. Examples of such goals are: gain employment, attend school, get a job, gain housing, stay sober, and reconnect with family members to name a few. The existing data

collected by WRC includes the number of hours participants spent with their mentors, both pre- and post-release, as well as the mentees' success in attaining their reentry goals. As a participant goes through the NB program, WRC records the status of the mentee in order to have up-to-date information. This information includes if participants are currently in the program, the number of hours they met with their mentor (pre- and post-release), if they dropped out, and/or recidivated.

Through the process of transition and reentry, mentors and mentees decide between themselves how often they are going to meet and how they are going to work together to achieve the mentee's goals. The NB coach meets with both on a regular basis and helps keep them on track. Mentors also assist mentees with any other needs that mentees require. Examples of this includes: showing a mentee how to ride a bus, getting a library card, assisting with appropriate attire for an interview, and renewing their driver's license. It is entirely up to the mentee how long they wish to participate in the New Beginnings' program. The program is voluntary and a mentee can end their participation at any time. WRC itself is interested in the improvement of the program to continue addressing the recidivism rate of participants in the program and in the city of Grand Rapids.

Research Design

The current study questions whether hours spent with a mentor predicts if mentees achieve their reentry goals. Data from WRC was collected from 2013 to 2014. This study's independent variable is the total number of hours mentees spent with their mentors while in the New Beginnings program, and looks separately at pre- and post-release hours. The dependent variable is whether mentees' goals were met at the completion of their involvement in the New Beginnings program. The first research question examines whether total hours spent with a mentor, by combining before and after their release hours, impacts if reentry goals were met.

Further, this study wishes to find the answer of which type of mentorship (pre- or post-release) is more influential for predicting the achievement of reentry goals. Indeed, the present study addresses an evident gap in the research literature by separately examining if hours spent with a mentor prior to release, as well as after release, has a significant impact on the achievement of recently released women's reentry goals.

Target Population

The population studied includes the entire population of the first cohort of female mentees in the NB program (N = 78). These women were currently in the Kent County Jail's reentry pod and agreed to participate in the NB program during their incarceration.

Approximately 60% of participants are white, 31% African American, 4.5% Hispanic, and 4.5% are comprised of "other races," including Native American and Asian/Pacific Islander. The mean age of the sample is approximately 33 years old. Women came to the NB program through two different jail programs: the sober living unit (SLU) and the community reentry center (CRC).

The SLU women received therapy and treatment during their time in SLU while the CRC (work release) women did not. Forty-six of the women self-identified as having trauma in their past, 81.6% reported having a substance use disorder, and 31% were diagnosed with a serious and persistent mental illness. Nearly forty-percent (37.9%) were deemed "most likely to recidivate" by the Kent County Jail.

Additionally, 87 female community members were utilized as mentors. All mentors volunteered and participated in training before being paired with their mentee. Thirty-seven (43%) mentors identified themselves as African American, 31 (35%) white, 3 (3.5%) multiracial, 1 (1.3%) Hispanic, and 15 (17.2%) did not indicate their race. The mean age of mentors in this study is 45.4 years-old.

Instrumentation

Data was taken from an excel sheet that WRC drafted and compiled into SPSS. Data was then cleaned and coded. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses were performed to find correlations and significance of variables. The total number of hours, as well as pre- and post-release hours, that mentees spent with their mentors with regards to achieving reentry goals, were examined.

Data Collection

Data that this study utilized was provided by the Women's Resource Center located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. New Beginnings' coaches collected data from 2012 to 2014 by recording the number of hours mentees spent with mentors before and after their release from the Kent County Jail, as well as if mentees' personal stated reentry goals were met. The data set was collected as part of routine intake procedures and was gathered for other WRC purposes, such as grant information. This process occurs after a female inmate volunteers to be a part of the program. Data was then organized in an excel spreadsheet by the NB coaches.

Human subject approval for this study was required and went through the Grand Valley State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The review highlighted that, because the current study is a secondary data analysis, subject approval nor consent was needed because the data received does not include any personal identifiers. The data was converted into a password protected SPSS file on a password protected USB storage, which is kept in a locked room. The original data set is housed at WRC's agency's office on a secured network in a secured building. WRC signed a data release agreement indicating its voluntary participation in the study. Because the data is secondary existing data, there is no direct benefit to the individuals whose reentry goals and number of hours spent with mentors are reflected in the data set. The research does not

involve interaction with the subjects or mentors represented in the data as there were no interviews or surveys conducted as part of the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS. In addition to univariate and bivariate analysis, a binary logistic regression, or logit regression model, was used to estimate the effect of total, pre-, and post-release hours with regards to mentee's achievement of goals.

Hypotheses

In accordance with Research Question 1, Hypothesis (H1) predicts that the more total hours a mentee spends with her mentor, the more likely she will succeed in achieving her reentry goals. Concerning Research Question 1A, Hypothesis 1A (H1A) predicts that mentor hours before and after release are significantly related to the successful completion of mentee reentry goals. Furthermore, the combination of pre- and post-release hours will result in the greatest likelihood of mentees achieving their reentry goals. Concerning Research Question 1B, Hypothesis 1B (H1B) predicts that post-release hours are more influential than pre-release hours for predicting achievement in reentry goals. This is because mentees spend more quality time with mentors post- release and need to work together to achieve the mentee's reentry goals. Additionally, the study's null hypothesis (H0) states that the number of hours spent with mentors has no effect with regards to mentees achieving their reentry goals.

H1:

Total Hours → Reentry goals
+

H1A:

Pre-release hours → Reentry goals
+
Post-release hours → Reentry goals
+

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter tests the stated hypotheses using univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analysis. With regards to multivariate analysis, a binary logistic regression was used to test the hypotheses, including the effect of total, pre-, and post-release hours with regards to mentee's achievement of reentry goals.

Univariate Analysis

The following univariate analysis shows the distribution of cases of one variable. Ultimately, univariate analysis is a measure of central tendency of several statistical summaries that, in a single number, represent the typical number in a group of several numbers. Examples include mean, mode, and median. Univariate statistics also includes a measure of dispersion which shows the amount of variation in the scores for, or values of, a variable. Measures of dispersion are variance and the standard deviation. When the dispersion is large, the scores or values are widely scattered. When dispersion is small, values are tightly clustered. The standard deviation provides the spread in distribution scores and describes the measure of the average among the scores in the distribution that deviate from the mean. Overall, the purpose of univariate analysis is to describe data. Therefore, data was taken and summarized to find patterns.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Individual-Level Variables

	Mean/ %		Range	
	Statistic	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Met goals	64.1%	0.483	0.00	1.00
Total hours	16.667	11.335	2.00	56.00
Pre-release hours	12.82	6.474	2.00	30.00
Post-release hours	3.85	7.412	0.00	30.00
Total days in program	242.885	125.507	1.00	575.00
Non-white	39.7%	0.493	0.00	1.00
Age	33.63	9.89	1.00	4.00
SLU program	65.4%	0.479	0.00	1.00
Serious mental illness	29.5%	0.459	0.00	1.00
Substance use	80.8%	0.397	0.00	1.00
Employment skills class hours	14.26	6.41	0.00	28.00
Trauma	0.423	0.497	0.00	1.00

Note. N=78. Variables were coded as followed: for met goals, 0= achieved reentry, goals 1= did not achieve reentry goals. Race is coded by majority/ minority by 0 and 1. 0= Caucasian, 1= African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American. For incoming program, 0= work release, 1= sober living unit. For serious mental illness, 0= no, 1= yes. For substance use, 0= no, 1= yes. For trauma, 0= no, 1= yes.

The following table shows that the mean, or average, for mentees achieving their goals is .64 (sd = .48). The average for the total number of hours mentees spent in the NB program is 16.6 (sd = 11.34) with hours ranging from 2 to 56. The average number of hours mentees spent in the NB program during incarceration is 12.82 hours (sd = 6.47) with hours ranging from 2 to

30. Lastly, the average number of hours mentees spent in the NB program after release is 3.85 hours (sd = 7.41) with hours ranging from 0 to 30.

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate analysis refers to the analysis of two variables at a time to find an existence of an association, as well as the strength of this association, or whether there are differences between two variables and the significance of these differences.

When viewing at the following table, readers should focus on significance. Significance is the degree to which a research finding is meaningful or important. The row of Pearson's correlation shows the degree of linear relationship of two variables that have been measured on interval scales. The asterisks show the significance level which is the probability of making a Type I error. A Type I error is an error made by wrongly rejecting a true null hypothesis. This might involve incorrectly concluding that two variables are related when they are not, or wrongly deciding that a sample statistic exceeds the value that would be expected by chance. Ultimately, the lower the probability, the greater the statistical significance. The p value, short for probability value, is the likelihood that a statistical result would have been obtained by chance alone. The p value is compared by the researcher with an alpha value to determine whether the result has statistical significance. The alpha value represents the probability that a Type I error has been committed. The smaller the alpha level, the more significant the finding because the smaller the likelihood that the finding is due to chance. Thus, an alpha level of .01 is a more difficult criterion to satisfy than a level of .05.

Table 4.2

Bivariate Correlations among Individual-level Variables

	Met goals	Total hours	Pre-release hours	Post-release hours	Total days in program	Employment skills class hours	SLU program	Non-white	Age	Serious mental illness	Substance use	Trauma
Met goals	1											
Total hours	.310**	1										
Pre-release hours	.100	.790**	1									
Post-release hours	.387**	.832**	.318**	1								
Total days in program	.314**	.467**	.201	.498**	1							
Employment skills class hours	-.053	.574**	.710**	.229*	.371**	1						
SLU program	-.217	.392**	.478**	.158	-.053	.370**	1					
Non-white	.093	-.070	-.064	-.083	-.074	-.068	-.058	1				
Age	.026	.057	.103	.033	-.001	.030	.160	.026	1			
Serious mental illness	-.321**	.005	.165	-.114	-.115	.162	.343**	-.196	.274*	1		
Substance use	-.369**	.276*	.217*	.229*	.002	.227*	.387**	-.276**	.038	.190	1	
Trauma	-.346**	-.015	.127	-.122	-.100	.108	.220*	-.051	.116	.528**	.319**	1

** . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Person Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note. Race is coded by majority/ minority by 0 and 1. 0= Caucasian, 1= African American, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Native American. N= 78

The table presented shows there is a significant finding at the .01 level that the total number of hours spent with a mentor is correlated with mentees' completion of reentry goals ($B = .31, p < .01$). Therefore, the more hours a mentee spends with her mentor is correlated with the likelihood she will achieve her reentry goals. There is also significance at the .001 level for post-release hours and mentees meeting their reentry goals ($B = .39, p < .01$). Therefore, the more number of hours mentees spent with their mentor after their incarceration is correlated with the likelihood she will achieve her reentry goals and complete the NB program. Results also show significance at the .01 level that post-release hours correlate with pre-release hours ($B = .32, p < .01$). In other words, if a mentee has a substantial number of post-release hours, it is correlated with the likelihood she also acquired a substantial number of pre-release hours while in the NB program.

The results also indicate significance at the .01 level of a correlation between total days spent in the NB program and meeting reentry goals ($B = .31, p < .01$). The more days a mentee spends in the program is correlated with the likelihood that she will achieve her reentry goals. Mentees' incoming program show high significance at the .001 level for total hours and pre-release hours. Therefore, it was found that a mentee coming to the NB program from the sober living unit, had more total hours ($B = .39, p < .001$), and specifically pre-release hours ($B = .48, p < .001$), in the NB program compared to mentees who came from work release.

Results show significance at the .01 level that mentees who have a serious mental illness is negatively correlated with achieving reentry goals ($B = -.32, p < .01$), meaning those with mental illness are less likely to succeed. Results indicate significance at the .01 level that trauma negatively correlates with meeting reentry goals ($B = -.35, p < .01$). Also, results show significance at the .001 level for the correlation of trauma and serious mental illness ($B = .53, p <$

.01) and significance at the .01 level for trauma and substance use ($B = .32, p < .01$). This suggests that mentees who have a history of trauma are correlated with having a serious mental illness and a substance use problem.

Furthermore, those who had a substance use problem showed significance at the .05 level for total, pre-, and post-release hours spent with mentors. Therefore, women in the NB program who have a substance use problem correlated with the likelihood to have more total hours compared to those who did not have a substance use problem ($B = .28, p < .05$). Furthermore, there is a correlation between those with a substance use problem and the number of pre- and post-release compared to those without a substance use problem ($B = .22, p < .05$) ($B = .23, p < .05$). Although there is a correlation with substance use and total, pre-, and post- release hours, table 4.2 shows a negative significance at the .01 level for those who use substances and achieving reentry goals ($B = -.37, p < .01$). Therefore, having a substance use problem is not correlated with the likelihood of achieving reentry goals.

Furthermore, this study's findings do not show significance that pre-release hours correlate with mentees achieving their reentry goals. This corresponds with the hypothesis that the employment skill classes and offender mentoring during incarceration may be less influential with regards to mentees achieving their reentry goals compared to post-release hours.

Multivariate Analysis

Multivariate analysis tests the simultaneous analysis of several independent variables on one dependent variables, while controlling for the influence of other variables. Within the multivariate model the likelihood of mentees meeting their reentry goals is the dependent variable. A binary logistic regression analysis is a likelihood ratio test. In the likelihood ratio test, the logistic regression model calculates the likelihood of the outcome being tested (Menard,

2002). Logistic regression is useful for situations in which researchers want to be able to predict the presence or absence of a characteristic or outcome based on values of a set of predictor variables. It is suited to models where the dependent variable is dichotomous; results shown for this study are represented in a logit regression model (*SPSS Regression Models 11.0*, 2001). This is used for predicting a categorical dependent variable (met goals) based on two or more independent variables. Logistic regression coefficients can be used to estimate odds ratios for each of the independent variables in the model (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

The binary regression model estimates beta in log odds, which is a regression coefficient for a sample expressed in standard deviation units (z-scores). The beta coefficient indicates the difference in a dependent variable associated with an increase or decrease of one log odds in an independent variable when controlling for the effects of other independent variables. This study's regression model predicts the logit, that is, the natural log of the odds of X, achieving reentry goals for X. This is shown with the following equation: $\ln(\text{ODDS}) = \ln(Y/1-Y)$.

S.E, or standard error, can be interpreted as the standard deviation. The standard deviation provides the spread in distribution scores and describes the measure of the average among the scores in the distribution that deviate from the mean. The degrees of freedom (*df*) represents the number of values free to vary when computing a statistic. In other words, it is the number of pieces of information that can vary independently of one another. The *df* tells how much data is used to calculate a particular statistic and is usually one less than the number of variables.

The odds ratio is a measure of association that shows the degree of relationship between two or more variables predicted by the model. For this study, the odds ratio predicts the likelihood of achieving reentry goals for every additional hour a mentee spends time with her

mentor. A 95% confidence interval is the desired percentage of scores that fall within a certain range of confidence limits. Confidence limits are the upper and lower values of a confidence interval which is a range of values of a sample statistic that is likely to contain a population parameter (B). It is a range of values with a known probability of including the true population value. The wider the confidence interval, the higher the confidence level.

Table 4.3

Binary Logistic Regression of Total Hours on Achievement of Reentry Goals

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step	Total hours	.287	.100	8.260	1	.004**	1.332	1.095	1.619
1 ^a	Non-white	-.265	.729	.132	1	.717	.767	.184	3.205
	Age	.236	.438	.290	1	.590	1.266	.537	2.985
	SLU program	-1.448	.963	2.262	1	.133	.235	.036	1.551
	Serious mental illness	-.605	.896	.456	1	.500	.546	.094	3.163
	Substance use	-21.532	9311.203	.000	1	.998	.000	0.000	
	Trauma	-.888	.789	1.268	1	.260	.411	.088	1.931
	Employment skills class hours	-.188	.095	3.924	1	.048*	.829	.688	.998
	Constant	21.521	9311.203	.000	1	.998	222045 3897.99		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Total hours, Race, Age, Incoming program, Serious mental illness, Substance use, Trauma, Employment skills class hours. N= 78.

** = $p < .01$, * = $p < .05$.

Table 4.3 presents the results relating to Research Question 1, (Do total hours predict if mentees will achieve their reentry goals?) The table shows that total hours mentees spend in the NB program has statistically significant effects on met goals. The log odds (B) of total hours for achieving reentry goals is .287 ($p < .01$). For every hour a mentee spends with her mentor, her

chances of achieving her reentry goals increases 1.33 times. Table 4.3 also shows that the number of employment skills class hours is negatively significant to meeting reentry goals ($B = -.19, p < .05$). Interestingly, for every hour of the employment skills class the odds of a mentee achieving her reentry goals decreases by .17.

Table 4.4

Binary Logistic Regression of Pre-Release Hours on Achievement of Reentry Goals

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1a	Pre-release hours	.199	.080	6.175	1	.013*	1.220	1.043	1.427
	Non-white	-.471	.637	.547	1	.460	.625	.179	2.175
	Age	.286	.356	.643	1	.422	1.331	.662	2.675
	SLU program	-1.085	.815	1.771	1	.183	.338	.068	1.670
	Serious mental illness	-1.021	.744	1.881	1	.170	.360	.084	1.550
	Substance use	-20.821	9531.6	.000	1	.998	.000	0.000	
	Trauma	-.796	.657	1.467	1	.226	.451	.125	1.636
	Employment skills class hours	-.110	.075	2.162	1	.142	.896	.773	1.037
	Constant	21.233	9531.6	.000	1	.998	1664593805.8		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Pre-release hours, Race, Age, Incoming program, Serious mental illness, Substance use, Trauma, Employment skills class hrs.

To answer the first part of Research Question 1A, are pre-release hours related to achieving reentry goals? Table 4.4 shows that pre-release hours have a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of meeting reentry goals at the .05 level ($B = .20, p < .05$). Therefore, every hour a mentee spends with her mentor during incarceration, her chances of achieving her reentry goals increases 1.22 times.

Table 4.5

Binary Logistic Regression of Post-Release Hours on Achievement of Reentry Goals

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Post-release hours	1.59	.726	4.80	1	.028*	4.906	1.183	20.355
	Non-white	-.248	.817	.092	1	.762	.781	.157	3.869
	Age	.376	.488	.592	1	.442	1.456	.559	3.791
	SLU program	-.394	.965	.167	1	.683	.674	.102	4.472
	Serious mental illness	-.314	1.048	.090	1	.765	.731	.094	5.695
	Substance use	-21.49	9851.14	.000	1	.998	.000	0.000	
	Trauma	-1.11	.904	1.50	1	.221	.330	.056	1.944
	Employment skills class hours	-.045	.063	.505	1	.477	.956	.844	1.082
	Constant	21.49	9851.14	.000	1	.998	2157602889.04		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Post-release hours, Race, Age, Incoming program, Serious mental illness, Substance use, Trauma, Employment skills class hours. N= 78.

* = $p < .05$

For the second part of Research Question 1A, are post-release hours related to achieving reentry goals? Table 4.5 shows that post-release hours have a statistically significant effect at the .05 level on met goals ($B = 1.60, p < .05$). For every hour a mentee spends with her mentor after incarceration, her chances of achieving her reentry goals increases by nearly five times.

Table 4.6

Binary Logistic Regression of Pre- and Post-Release Hours on Achievement of Reentry Goals

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	Pre-release hours	.268	.163	2.69	1	.101	1.307	.949	1.800
	Post-release hours	1.70	.757	5.04	1	.025*	5.480	1.242	24.179
	Non-white	-.472	.857	.303	1	.582	.624	.116	3.349
	Age	.320	.515	.388	1	.533	1.378	.502	3.778
	SLU program	-.731	1.148	.406	1	.524	.481	.051	4.569
	Serious mental illness	-.133	1.092	.015	1	.903	.876	.103	7.437
	Substance use	-22.57	8998.97	.000	1	.998	.000	0.000	
	Trauma	-.927	.944	.965	1	.326	.396	.062	2.516
	Employment class hours	-.248	.154	2.62	1	.106	.780	.577	1.054
	Constant	22.29	8998.97	.000	1	.998	47672246		
							11.6		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Pre-release hours, Post-release hours, Race, Age, Incoming program, Serious mental illness, Substance use, Trauma, Employment skills class hrs. N= 78.

* = $p < .05$

In response to Research Question 1B, are pre- or post-release hours more influential for predicting achievement of reentry goals? Table 4.3 shows that when accounting for both pre- and post-release hours, only post- release hours are statistically significant at the .05 level ($B = 1.70$, $p < .05$). Therefore, when controlling for post-release hours, pre-release hours are no longer significant. The log odds of pre-release hours on met goals is .27 ($p < .05$). For every hour a mentee spends with her mentor post-release, her chances of achieving her reentry goals increase almost 5.5 times while controlling for pre-release hours and other factors.

It was hypothesized that the more time (hours) a mentee spends with her mentor while in the NB program, the more likely she will succeed in achieving her reentry goals. Furthermore, it

was predicted that the combination of pre- and post-release hours will result in the greatest likelihood of mentees achieving their reentry goals. When considering pre- and post-release hours separately, it was hypothesized that post-release hours would be more influential in terms of mentees completing their reentry goals. This is because mentees are not in an incarcerated environment and have stronger ties to their mentors once in the community. Indeed, mentees rely on their mentors in the community especially during their transition from jail to society.

Results indicate that total hours spent in the NB program increase the odds of mentees completing their reentry goals (H1). As hypothesized, when examining pre- and post-release hours separately, both predict the achievement of reentry goals. However, post-release hours are more important in terms of mentees completing their reentry goals when compared to pre-release hours (H1A). Indeed, when accounting for both pre- and post- release hours, pre-release hours are not significant while the hours a mentee spends with her mentor after incarceration increases mentees' chances of achieving their reentry goals by almost 5.5 times. Therefore, the prediction that post-release hours are more influential than pre-release hours concerning the completion reentry goals is supported. The prediction that pre-release hours are significantly related to the successful completion of reentry goals is limited (H1B).

Chapter 5: Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations

The following discusses the study's results in relation to past scholarly research and theory concerning women and reentry, time spent with mentors, and the achievement of reentry goals. Limitations of this study are addressed and recommendations for future research are explored.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to provide insight on offender mentoring for women recently released from jail. This was done by analyzing the New Beginnings (NB) program in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Results show that the total number of hours mentees spend with their mentors determine the achievement of reentry goals. Indeed, for every hour a mentee spends with her mentor, the chances of achieving her reentry goals increase by 1.33 times. When evaluating pre- and post- release hours separately, it was found that both were statistically related to mentees achieving their reentry goals. Overall, this study supports scholarly literature which proposes that offender mentoring is promising (Miller, Barnes, Miller, & McKinnon, 2012; Sherman et al., 2002). Crossey (2009) states that areas in which mentoring may be most effective includes females who have a limited criminal history and have support finding employment. This study fits that criteria as the NB population consists of women released from jail (lower-level offenses compared to prison) who are participating in a program whose agency (WRC) focuses on assisting women with finding meaningful employment.

However, when controlling for post-release hours, pre-release hours loses its significance with regards to mentees achieving their reentry goals. Indeed, post-release hours remain significant and for every hour mentees spend with their mentors post-release, the odds of achieving their reentry goals increase by almost 5.5 times. This finding provides insight into the

effectiveness of post-release offender mentoring and fills an important gap in the literature. Results indicate that post-release are possibly more influential than pre-release hours because mentees are not in an incarcerated environment. Mentees might have stronger ties to their mentors once in the community because they are no longer in a controlled environment and must rely on their mentor, especially during the difficult period of transition.

Even so, literature shows optimism for the effectiveness of programs in jails and prisons to prepare inmates for life on the outside (Sherman et al., 2002). While this study's findings show that pre-release hours have limited ability to aid offenders, the time mentors spend with their mentees in the Kent County Jail may matter in the reduction of recidivism when accounting for cumulateness. Indeed, mentoring inside the jail can be very important with regards to relationship building. Another possible positive benefit from the time mentees and mentors spend with each other in jail is the process of building a strong foundation of trust. In turn, this trust can be observed with the significance between post-release hours and achieving reentry goals.

Furthermore, the lack of significance may not be reflective of the advantages of the mentee-mentor relationship before release. Indeed, when observed separately in Table 4.4, pre-release hours are significant at the .05 level with regards to meeting goals. Although there is no correlation seen in Table 4.6 when controlling for post-release hours, it is important to note that the population studied was 78. With regards to pre-release hours, the potential for significance may increase if there is a bigger population, which makes studies statistically stronger.

Literature suggests that the relationship shared between mentee and mentor relates to social bonding theory (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Indeed, mentees' social ties to NB mentors might limit deviant behavior and challenge mentees to accomplish their reentry goals. Through

the development of mentee and mentor relationships from jail, transition, and reintegration, social capital is created when those relations change in ways that facilitate action, in this study's case, achieving reentry goals (Coleman, 1988). Indeed, the quality of the relationship between mentee and mentor have a profound impact on adult deviance.

Furthermore, this study's findings suggest that developed social controls, such as mentoring relationships, provide important gateways and connections to the wider society through jobs, social ties, and friendship networks (Fagan & Meares, 2008). It is Sampson and Laub's (1993) belief that adults, regardless of delinquent background, are inhibited from committing crime to the extent that they have social capital invested in their work and family lives. Through the NB program, social capital from mentors allows mentees to invest in the achievement of their reentry goals.

The effectiveness of mentoring relationships can also be observed through this study's bivariate analysis which revealed that the number of days a mentee spends in the NB program is correlated with the achievement of reentry goals. Perhaps this is because mentees and mentors grow closer to each other the longer they are in the program and thus, hold each other accountable to achieve reentry goals and complete the NB program. Empirical literature supports that mentoring may be effective because it provides a relatively intense relationship based on substantial periods of contact that can take place over longer periods of time (Brown & Ross, 2010).

Interestingly, bivariate analysis showed that total, pre-, and post-release hours spent with mentors is correlated with those who reported they have a substance use problem. Indeed, those who have a substance use problem spent more hours with their mentor in all three areas of this study (total, pre-, and post- release). One possible explanation for this is that some mentors have

a history of incarceration and substance abuse themselves and can relate to their mentee. Indeed, if a woman in reentry learns from a woman who was also incarcerated and experienced reentry, she is more likely to identify herself closely with that person in an effort to form anti-criminal behavior (LeBel, 2007). Cressey (1955) calls this process “retroflexive reformation.”

Retroflexive reformation is an example of social learning theory in that just as criminal behavior can be learned through interactions with intimate personal groups, social structure can also be learned and shape an individual’s behavior (Akers, 1994). In the case of shaping individual behavior, perhaps mentees find it helpful to attain their own sobriety by learning and taking the advice of someone who went through what they are currently experiencing.

Bivariate analysis also shows a correlation between trauma, serious mental illness, and substance use. These results provide further evidence of empirical research that women facing reentry are more likely to have co-occurring disorders, in particular, substance abuse problems interlinked with trauma or mental illness (Ney, 2014). Indeed, substance use and abuse are often used as a self-medicating coping strategy of victimization (Mejia, Zea, Romero, & Saldivar, 2015).

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting this study’s findings. First, it is unknown as to what mentees and mentors actually did during their time spent together. This is important because the amount of quality time mentors spent with their mentees, such as assisting with resumes or helping to fill out job applications, correlates with mentees achieving their reentry goals. On the other hand, if the time spent between a mentee and mentor was not used to achieve reentry goals, it may be less likely a mentee will complete the program by achieving her reentry goals. Overall, the data did not indicate how time was spent qualitatively between

mentees and mentors when they spent time together away from WRC and therefore, the study is limited in the knowledge how mentors and mentees worked together to achieve reentry goals.

Another limitation to acknowledge is that the NB program had two components: employment skill classes during incarceration and offender mentoring throughout incarceration that continued during transition and reintegration. This study focused primarily on offender mentoring. Even so, this study did control for the exposure to employment skill classes and did find a negative relationship between employment skill classes and reentry goals. However, it is unknown as to what extent the classes in the Kent County Jail affected mentees and their achievement of their reentry goals because there is no correlation between the two variables in the multivariate analysis when controlling for post-release hours. Further research is needed in order to examine the impact of the combination of the classes and mentoring on women's achievement of reentry goals.

Also, mentees personally decided what reentry goals they wanted to set for themselves. Thus, the researcher had no control over what specific goals mentees strived to achieve but was told by NB coaches some common goals among mentees; employment, registering for school, gaining housing, sobriety, and reconnecting with their children. Furthermore, the data did not indicate participants' specific reentry goals, only if goals were achieved for not. It is possible some goals are more easy to accomplish compared to others, for example, gaining employment versus writing a resume.

Additionally, WRC requires three or four goals for mentees to strive to achieve while in the NB program. One mandatory goal was continued mentoring post-release because the grant by which the NB program was funded required this goal. This is problematic because this presents a tautology where the independent variable is also part of what is measured in the dependent

variable. This is less problematic for mentees who had four goals in their reentry plan because success in the program is defined as meeting 75% of goals; therefore, if a mentee achieves three goals, not including mentoring, they are successful. That being said, if a mentor only chose to strive to achieve three goals and failed to continue mentoring, she would only have 66% achievement of goals and, therefore, would unsuccessfully complete the program.

It is also important to address that NB has had many cohorts participate in the program. This study analyzed only the first cohort. Therefore, it is unknown if future cohorts achieved more reentry goals since the beginning of the NB program. Indeed, when the first cohort participated in the program, NB was a new program and some revisions have changed the dynamics since that time. For example, the NB program now utilizes group mentoring and provides employment skill classes to women after incarceration.

Lastly, the study's small population size ($N = 78$) may have resulted in inadequate statistical power to detect associations of meaningful statistics that are significant. As explained in the discussion section, perhaps this study would have found a significance between pre-release hours and achievement of reentry goals if the population size was larger. Relatedly, the population may not have been representative of all women in jail due to NB pulling their participants from two different units in the Kent County Jail (work release and sober living unit). Additionally, there is a possible selection bias when choosing to use incarcerated women from these two units because they were already working on bettering their situations for when they were released. Indeed, those in work release were showing the responsibility of maintaining employment during their incarceration while those in the sober living unit were preparing to keep their sobriety once released and throughout reentry.

Recommendations for Future Research

Many questions regarding the impact of offender mentoring remain, including not only when, but how mentoring should be best implemented and for what goals. Therefore, more extensive research is needed on offender mentoring to determine its effectiveness in assisting persons in numerous aspects of reentry. To address the limitation earlier mentioned concerning the lack of knowledge of future cohorts, future research should compare the different NB cohorts to analyze the progression of the program. Further, it would be beneficial to perform a longitudinal study; once a mentee has completed the NB program, researchers should do a follow up study three, five, and ten years to determine if she has successfully reintegrated and not recidivated.

Future research could also conduct a quasi-experimental study, in which NB participants being studied are compared to other NB cohorts or perhaps the general jail population. NB participants from various cohorts would comprise of the experimental group and the general jail population would be the comparison group. The assumption of a quasi-experimental study is that any difference observed on the experimental group (NB participants) would be attributable to offender mentoring. While a quasi-experimental design is not as statistically strong as a true experimental design, where assignment to the comparison and experimental groups is random to ensure the groups start off equal, it avoids ethical concerns associated with random assignment. For example, randomly assigning women into the comparison group results with individuals not receiving assistance from mentors. This is unethical because perhaps some individuals truly need the assistance of a mentor to succeed in their transition and reentry but were randomly selected to be a part of the comparison group that doesn't get the intervention (NB program). Therefore, future research should preform quasi-experimental studies with regards to offender mentoring.

In addition, future research should address the lack of information with regards to what specific goals individual mentees are attempting to achieve. Researchers should work with agencies before data collection so they can assist with the categorizing of what appropriate goals mentees should strive for in accordance to the specific study. Researchers and agencies could then track specific mentee goals and examine if mentees achieved certain goals compared to other goals.

Conclusion

The New Beginnings program was established by the Women's Resource Center in order to assist women in reentry to successfully reintegrate back into the community of Grand Rapids by utilizing community members for offender mentoring. Offender mentoring has emerged as one possible approach to teach individuals the skills to succeed in society after incarceration. Overall, research shows promising results with regards to the success of offender mentoring as mentors have been found to act as a guide to conventional society. This study supports the concept that offender mentoring establishes social bonds through the development of strong attachments to prosocial others (mentors). This allows behavioral change and the achievement of reentry goals.

This study offers promising results with regards to offender mentoring and its impact on recently release women. Specifically, mentees who spend more time with their mentor after incarceration are more likely to achieve their reentry goals and complete the NB program. This study's findings suggest that offender mentoring should be recognized for its potential in assisting women with their reentry goals. This, in turn, allows women in reentry a better chance for a smoother transition back to conventional society.

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