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Crime Leads To Time and Time Back To Crime: The Effect Of Employment On Recidivism

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Crime Leads To Time and Time Back To Crime: The Effect Of Employment On Recidivism

By

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Abstract

This paper opens with a general history of prison systems and the recurring issue of overpopulation in prisons, which leads to the main topic of recidivism rates amongst former offender populations who find themselves with work opportunities. A summary of this issue as a whole is brought up with possible solutions to address the issues, as well as the problems that can and would arise with the proposed implementation of a streamlined prison-based career exploration and job training program. Continuing through the paper, the focus shifts to the ethics of the topic. Ethics play a significant role when looking at the capstone project implementation of inserting career centers into prisons. Questions about funding, fairness toward the struggling general population, and the offender's histories come into play. In this section, this will be addressed, as well as, what this service would provide to criminal justice and corrections, as well as the long-term effects that could arise from the implementation of the prison program. In the last leg of the paper, the focus shifts back to the incorporation of evidence-based practices into the Capstone project; the two main practices, those being RNR principles and cognitive-behavioral intervention, are introduced. Discussed in this section are the benefit of incorporating both of these practices, potential challenges that could arise, and why this is so important for criminal justice and corrections as a whole.

Key Words: Recidivism, reintegration, RNR Principles, cognitive-behavioral interventions

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The issue presented is one that is under the table, yet leads to harshly negative outcomes for former offenders, the issue being the lack of resources to help the incarcerated population upon release find work to help, congruently promoting more opportunity and stability for said individuals. That said, this paper will be reviewing that very idea with the main question being how employment affects the recidivism rates of offenders. If someone were to say this isn't a problem, think again, as studies show over a four-year period post-incarceration, the employment rate stuck between 34.9 to 37.9 percent, (Wang & Bertram, 2022). What this means is that between the years of 2010-2014, when this study was done, over sixty percent of people post-incarceration were jobless at any given time (Wang & Bertram, 2022). Even those who may be ignorant of the issue can see when presented with these numbers can not deny that there is a significant problem present here.

The chosen issue was pursued in wanting to learn more about a topic that may not be in the spotlight to the extent of other topics within criminal justice. When speaking on the concept of prisons in the United States, understand the history behind them, and the possible unintended ignorance by which they harm individuals and society alike. The motivation for this topic arose from working security in Minneapolis, MN. Through the various interactions with many people in the homeless population, as well as people who had criminal records, seeing the same people each time, it became sad to hear that little was being done to help these individuals. At times frustration for them was beyond apparent, but in the end, all it takes is a step back to understand

that people do not want to be in the situations they are in and if they could help it, would surely trade out their situation for one that is more fortunate.

Knowing the history of how prison systems started, it is no wonder that people struggle to “get better”, as the system is based upon punishing criminals (Lisa, 2020). Not only this, but it was based on punishing inherently “bad people”, meaning that reform was not in the plan, the only chance at redemption was through offenders' punishment. There could be a whole paper on this topic itself, but to keep it brief with a few startling facts prisons took over in place of public executions in the 18th century. In the following century, though slavery was banished, prisons would take advantage of the Thirteenth Amendment allowing for slavery or servitude as punishment for crime, as long as they were duly convicted (Lisa, 2020).

The 1960s and 70s brought the war on crime and drugs which is known today for its effectiveness in targeting and destroying minority communities. And though it is cleaned up in many ways, the thirteenth amendment still lingers today through toned down significantly which cannot be denied, with the mass rates of incarceration there is still an increase in the stream of forced labor within prisons, and when in private prisons this does provide profit to the firms that own it (Lisa, 2020).

Now, to not acknowledge the obvious progress in some areas would be ignorant; however, as much as time has passed with this progress, many issues within our justice system remain present (Lisa, 2020). With these in mind, it becomes more clear why there is an issue with prison overpopulation, and so how can the issue effectively be addressed. That is what will be gone over within the paper.

What is presented within this topic of offender reintegration is backed by empirical evidence, meaning it can be seen that studies are pointing to this as being a major factor for

stalling growth and maintaining a livable lifestyle post-incarceration. The relationship between recidivism and employment is also one that isn't necessarily covered by mainstream media sources, and so there is a lot of information to discuss and lay out that others may simply not know about. The subtopics within this topic also help to understand why this issue presents itself in society and is certainly worth delving into it, such as work programs, risk factors, and the challenges that present themselves when offenders do make their reentry back into society post-incarceration (Fornoff & Miller, 2017). Some negatives that could potentially present themselves are that people may look and say, why provide resources to people who commit crimes and have harmed society in one form or another? Should we put money into someone who has a history of crime? Obvious challenges such as funding are present here as well, with ideas pondered as to how we could address these challenges throughout the text. Noting one of these issues of outright, with the money put into keeping offenders out of society, there are more efficient methods presented that will instead help transition them back into society, and not introduce them back as offenders, but as reformed citizens.

Overall, the risk, as some might see it will almost certainly lead to a greater likelihood of positive outcomes for all parties involved, including the offenders, the general public, workplaces, and the correctional system itself with offenders finding employment with a consistent, livable income, crime dropping due to less recidivism amongst offenders and decreasing prison population over time with fewer repeat offenders ending up back in the system. These ideas will be discussed and integrated upon moving forward through the analysis.

For the capstone project, the goal was to find a topic concerning a current issue that does not necessarily get as much attention as some other likewise meaningful and relevant issues in society, such as the use of force, homelessness, or community relations. The idea of prisons came

up, as in previous coursework and study, prisons have come up as an issue for a multitude of reasons. As research was done, the interest specified more on the people who make up the prisons, the offenders. One goal of this research is to find out how these offenders adapt to the implementation process that occurs after they have served their sentence. Brief searches reveal some somber facts. It is apparent that the people who are incarcerated are oftentimes repeating offenders, and though the rates vary over time, as of 2023, the rate of recidivism after one year outside of incarceration is 44 percent (Wisevoter, 2023). So, what this shows is oftentimes it is the same population, the same people, being circulated through the justice system. It must first be understood how these individuals end up in the situation of being incarcerated to fully grasp the concept of mass incarceration and high recidivism rates.

It is no big secret that the United States has a clear issue with prison population and incarceration rates. Over the past two decades, our prison population has been consistently right around two million active prisoners, with the year 2018 being at around 2.12 million prisoners in the United States (World Prison Brief, 2016). To put that into perspective, as of the United States population in 2019, the prison population per one hundred thousand people land right around six hundred twenty-nine people in prison per one hundred-thousand-person population (World Prison Brief, 2016). These numbers are incredibly high; looking further into this, it gets even more concerning with the prejudice in policing and arrests being present. Now, the blame cannot be placed solely on the police for this, some of the issues leading to the negative outcomes are the laws themselves. Of the current state prison population, the African American population is five times that of the white population. African Americans only make up about 13.4 percent of the population compared to Caucasian people which is right around sixty percent (NAACP, 2021).

In response, one might question if there is a possibility that African Americans are committing crimes at a much steeper rate. The statistics show, this not to be the case. The examples are expansive, but focusing on one that is nonviolent, yet heavily enforced, we see that both African Americans and White people use drugs at a similar rate. Yet, African Americans are charged at six times the rate of white people (NAACP, 2021). This brief introduction to prison populations is not meant to be a slander of the system. It is to show there is a need for change. As mentioned, our prison populations are massive in the United States, with rates of arrest on the rise (Lee, 2015). How does the U.S. fare in prison rates, when compared to the rest of the world? As of 2015, the United States shared about five percent of the total world's population, yet shockingly, held right around a quarter of the world's prisoner population with that being about twenty-five percent. Even more so concerning when we consider the U.S. crime rates are at historic lows, yet our prison populations are seemingly on the incline (Lee, 2015). A troubling truth that is beginning to show is that we are punishing crime at a higher rate now than we did even fifty years ago, and with the progressions made as a society, this cannot be acceptable.

An article titled *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2020*, by Wendy Sawyer, a research director at Prison Policy Initiative, and Peter Wagner, an attorney and Executive director of Prisoner Policy Initiative, dive into the topic further. What is discussed in this article pieces together why our prison systems are so packed to the brim, statistics that relate to our prison populations, and common misconceptions about our prisoners and prison system. One area of highlight within the article is the consistent, massive flow of prisoners in and out of the system, with six hundred thousand people being put into prison each year and upward of 10.6 million arrests each year (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). The arrests are important because of the people arrested; according to the article, about twenty-five percent of them get rearrested within the

same year (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). Of those arrested, due to the laws surrounding jail, those who make bail can exit in as little as a few hours; however, some people are not as fortunate financially, and thus, this can lead to people being jailed potentially up to their hearing. Of those people who are rearrested, they often are dealing with substance abuse, mental health issues, or poverty (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020), and as we know, this only gets worse for these individuals as they move up the tree to prison sentences.

The article continues and touches on important, highly misrepresented myths involving prisoners and our prison system that can be related to some of the issues brought up so far. The myths presented are as such: releasing non-violent drug offenders would end mass incarceration, private prisons are at the corrupt center of incarceration, prisons, and prisoners exist to provide a huge slave labor force, and people in prison for violent and sexual crimes are too dangerous to be released, and expanding community supervision is the best approach in reducing incarceration (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). Though the reading in itself can be shocking initially, upon further explanation, it made sense and brought perspective to otherwise controversial subjects.

In releasing non-violent drug offenders, this simply could not be the sole answer. It is a relatively common belief to think releasing drug offenders would have an astounding effect on mass incarceration, and though there certainly would have been an impact, just not to the extent one may think. Of the prison population, about a fifth or twenty percent of them are in for drug-related offenses (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). With drug offenses, it should not be all about releasing the people within the prisons, though pushes for release should continue, the issue is the enforcement of drugs, as this is where people get criminal records due to the war on drugs movement that started in the 1970s, that has an apparent and remarkable impact still in modern America.

The effect a criminal record can have on a person can be described as no less than life-altering. Once you get a criminal record, then, life can become increasingly more difficult, and it increases the chance you will be more severely charged with a crime in the future, with first-time offenders often receiving lesser sentencing for similar crimes to that of someone with a criminal record (Marsala Law Group, 2021). The misconception of private prisons running the criminal justice system is something that is quite simply proven wrong, as private prisons make up only about nine percent of all prisoners (Haberman, 2018). That is not to say that private prisons are not a negative thing, as they benefit from the mass incarceration, because by privatizing services such as phone calls, medical care, etc., you force the cost of incarceration onto the prison population and their families, which does harm in more ways than one (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

The myth of private companies using the prison workforce as slave labor is also not a main driver in mass incarceration though it is an issue as less than one percent of prisoners from private prisons, 6% if you include state-owned facilities end up working for these companies through the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program, (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). On that note, prison work in non-privatized prisons such as cafeterias, laundry, and other operations do criminally underpay prisoners, with people making as little as zero to a few dollars a day maximum off the incredible workload that they are put through. This pays for many of the maintenance costs of prisons, which then allows the prisons to cloak the actual costs of running prisons from the public, while at the same time, taking advantage of their oftentimes, free workforce as they can not say no, to further punishment being the reality (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

The fourth myth is the one that is controversial and shocking, certainly hard to grasp, understanding the severity of the individuals' crimes in comparison to more tame offenses. This myth says that people who have done violent crimes or sexual crimes are too dangerous to be released, however, when thinking about mass incarceration, this is an ignorant idea as individuals who fall into these categories are the least likely to re-offend, with Sawyer and Wagner, stating that they are over 20 percent less likely to re-offend than people who fall other any other offense category (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

This is all frankly shocking at first introduction, but it has everything to do with age and development. The peak age people commit these crimes is during adolescence, with the stars showing a decrease in this behavior with age, likely stemming from the full development of the brain and being able to cognitively understand the consequences of one's actions beyond the current moment (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). The focus shouldn't be detention, but rather prevention. There needs to be more put into why people commit these crimes, and how we help people who have these risk factors present within themselves. This is easier said than done, and it raises lots of questions about morality. Still, looking at it purely statistically, it should not be discounted that these individuals, particularly if committing a crime in youth, should be looked at in receiving the necessary help.

Finally, the fifth myth is community supervision is the approach we need to take to reduce incarceration (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). An example of this would include probation, but the issue with this alternative to jailing is that oftentimes the supervision is often so rigorous, strict, and punitive, that people are seemingly unable to meet the requirements thus leading to failure and re-entry into the prison system. A clear example of this can be seen in 2016, when

nearly 168,000 people were incarcerated for violations of their parole, simply due to failing to meet the restrictive guidelines in place (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020).

Sawyer and Wagner leave this idea with the thought of reforming alternative sentencing to reward the appropriate behavior and successes rather than being on a mission to find and point out the individual's failures. This change of mindset reformation could be impactful for the whole corrections system. You have to hold people accountable in all situations, but at the same time, help them make these improvements within themselves rather than striking up and tallying all their mistakes to push them back further in the process of reforming society. In looking at these myths, and some of the propositions that have been brought up, there are certainly arguments that can be made from the other perspective as well, but for addressing the mass incarceration issue, it would be foolish not to look into possible solutions and changes of mindset, if our goal is to not only address this issue but to legitimately move forward and make significant changes.

When talking about offenders and the cycle of re-offending, what does not get acknowledged much by the public is how much of a struggle it can be to find employment after having a criminal record. Many jobs still ask about criminal records during an interview with only 14 states currently with Ban the Box law in place and of varying degrees of enforcement (Gray, 2020). As much as it would like to be said otherwise, this still stands as a big reason for forgoing the hiring process. In this sense, it could be beneficial for employers not to be able to ask or base workplace judgment on the criminal history of an individual (Iacurci, 2022). If that person has truly served their time, then why should they continue to be punished after re-entrance into society? Granted, the concerns of an employer are understandable in this specific situation. They are taking the potential risk of hiring an ex-offender, and if something were to go

wrong, they would have to deal with the consequences. So, we now have offenders who need jobs and employers weary of hiring offenders, what is the appropriate next step here? This is where government intervention has to come into play, and in some cases, it has (National Institute of Corrections, 2014).

There is a program set in place currently called the Federal Bonding program in which the employer benefits from first hiring the ex-offender, and then immunity in case things were to go wrong. To this thought, this is not to say the employer would be allowed to treat the hired offender differently, but perhaps the incentive of the insurance over the new employee is shown to be effective in hiring a potential risk (National Institute of Corrections, 2014). This gives incentive to the employer and inevitably achieves what is a productive step in lowering rates of recidivism by getting more people with a criminal record opportunity to work and this would be easily implemented in partnering with the capstone topic of career skills and development serviced into prisons.

The Federal Bonding Program (FBP) has proven itself to work, with thousands of cases in them helping offenders with job placement. The FBP issues bonds that serve as a tool for job placement, this guarantees employers the honesty of "at-risk" job seekers. The FBP is designed in a manner that, through their bond insurance, reimburses the employer for any loss at the hand of the hired employee, with no deductible to become the employer's liability (National Institute of Corrections, 2014).

This looks all fine and good on paper, but what matters is the results that they have gotten through this program, and they certainly have gotten the results, "The USDOL [U.S. Department of Labor] experiment has proved to be a great success, with over 42,000 job placements made for at-risk job seekers who were automatically made bondable. Since approximately 460 proved to

be dishonest workers, bonding services as a job placement tool can be considered to have a 99% success rate” (National Institute of Corrections, 2014, para. 1). The synopsis here is that when properly put into place, provided resources for ex-offenders, labeled as high-risk, have extreme rates of succession. Employment for offenders is one of the effective methods in promoting avoidance of recidivism. With no intervention, the work opportunities become more difficult, and this is the reality for many, with a study of over 700 released prisoners in the United States showing that of the release, over 20 percent of them did not even realize there were education or employment programs available to them during or post-incarceration (Visher et al., 2011). Without the utilization of resources, people tend to leave the system on nearly the same terms they came into it, and with the addition of a criminal record, if they had not already had one.

This topic of unemployment damage is highlighted in a research article called, *Employment and Ex-offenders in the United States: Effects of Legal and Extralegal Factors*, written by Sessa Kethineni and David Nicolas Falcone. This article looks into an issue plaguing the U.S. criminal justice system, this being recidivism rates among male offenders. It talks about some concurrent studies between post-incarceration unemployment and crime, where others see unemployment to be a major risk factor for criminalistic behavior. It reviews many studies on employment and recidivism, presents quantitative data that consistently show an increase in recidivism when individuals do not find work after incarceration, and even further when they do not take advantage of potential employment programs during or after incarceration due to lack of participation or knowledge of said programs (Kethineni & Falcone, 2007).

The study continues and touches on a great point by addressing that getting criminals a job does not mean that they may pass up a criminal opportunity, as there are many other factors, including mental health and medical problems, and many offenders will be back in the public eye

at some point (Kethineni & Falcone, 2007). This is because when force assistance upon people, some offenders simply refuse help toward reemployment or skills training opportunities. This issue is magnified when you realize just about thirty percent of prisoners have received less than a high school degree and even more so incarcerated adults score at the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy, with literacy being thirty percent of the incarcerated population and just over fifty percent for numeracy (Tufig, 2017). So not only are there lacking skills and motivation, but also a lack of proof of education that is minimally required for many livable wage jobs.

One of the essential parts of offender reintegration is improving employment potential. Four different ways to do this by providing skill-building opportunities while in prison; employers should be given incentives to hire offenders, clear statutory guidelines should be established for employers, and crime prevention should be prioritized (Kethineni & Falcone, 2007). What is shown in the information on this topic is that ex-offenders are far more likely to re-offend if they do not find jobs than in comparison to when they are given opportunities for work and employment. Another important aspect of these former offenders getting more rights is ensured representation in government. However, the United States is inconsistent with this as in some places; felons lose the right to vote; thus they do not get choices in their local jurisdiction as to who they want representing them (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2021). The concern in these places is less of a voice will be given and heard for this population because elected officials have little to no reason, because their election depends upon individuals who can vote for them, and thus their efforts and propositions are going to be targeted toward the eligible voters (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2021).

The voting rights of felons are different from state to state; the National Conference of State legislatures site says this on the topic, "In the District of Columbia, Maine, and Vermont,

felons never lose their right to vote, even while they are incarcerated. In 21 states, felons lose their voting rights only while incarcerated, and receive automatic restoration upon release. In 16 states, felons lose their voting rights during incarceration, and for some time after, typically while on parole and/or probation, with voting rights being restored after this period. Former felons may also have to pay any outstanding fines, fees, or restitution before their rights are restored as well. In 11 states, felons lose their voting rights indefinitely for some crimes and can require a governor's pardon for voting rights to be restored, face an additional waiting period after completion of sentence (including parole and probation), or require an additional action before voting rights can be restored" (NCSL, 2019, p. 1).

Understanding the importance of work opportunities and rights granted to the offender population, the question comes up, what is currently in place within the system and is available to offenders that helps them find employment proven to have benefits? This is the big question that as a society should be asked. Too often, it can be easy to get mesmerized by an issue, so much so that there is a failure to dig into the building blocks leading to it. When we fully understand how we have come into a negative situation, we can then begin addressing how to specifically work to change what we have in place that leads to undesired results.

Ethics and morality should be at the forefront of any topic revolving around the implementation of an already established organization, and even more so when that deals with a criminally convicted population (Maslow, 2022). The topic of implementing a career center in prisons certainly falls under this realm of open discussion. Some administrative and ethical issues that could present themselves in this area are funding, and providing a beneficial service to incarcerated that is not available to the general population, and who would these services be available to within the prisons?

The first issue is pretty straightforward in that there could be an ethical debate on if it is right to fund this opportunity for people who have been, in some aspect, hazardous to society as a whole. On top of this, would an implementation such as this being funded take away from other aspects of corrections? The reality of this is that of all state prisoners arrested around 95 percent of them are released at some point, (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2003). What this means is the issue can certainly be pushed down the road and you can wait out an offenders sentence, but if released and not given opportunities to thrive such as employment or treatment to manage their behaviors, the stats point toward recidivism being a likely outcome, so in short, it is pointless, even damaging to do nothing with the prison population, thinking that time will be a magic medicine on its own.

The next issue is essential, are the populations that this implementation serves deserving of the opportunity and privilege that is being afforded to them, and if so, how do we justify them getting this opportunity over that of someone who is not incarcerated and remains in the general population? This could easily be augmented from both perspectives, but like for the previous question, the vast majority of offenders eventually leave the system, so do we want those people to have the opportunity to change, or is it a personal problem rather than a societal one, these are questions that an administrator would have to answer, and the answer should fall along the line of understanding that the decisions that got them incarcerated are on them, but if they are going to rejoin society, than the responsibility to make sure that individual is ready for that, is not just there own.

And finally, the third issue could be the provision of the same opportunity to people of varying crime offenses. An example would be offering the same opportunity to participate in the career services opportunity, but one person has a drug offense, and the other a sexual assault

charge. This is hard to answer as it is a very opinionated topic, and so as an administrator, it should all depend upon if that individual has received the proper treatment and time necessary for them to be able to meet the reintegration goals.

The topic needs to be looked at through an ethical lens because though the benefits that the program could provide are undeniable, it has to be acknowledged that there is going to be pushback to its implementation due to different and varying perspectives around the sensitive areas of this topic, that being the subjects who receive benefit, and where the funding for an organizational implementation like this comes from. By looking at the topic from an ethical perspective, we allow solutions to potential issues that could arise to be thought out before they manifest in reality (Garth-James, 2022).

This implementation is important to both society and the offender population, but on top of that, it provides great benefits to criminal justice and corrections professionals on top of it (Dummermuth, 2019). The idea behind the topic is to provide an opportunity for former offenders to find work, as they are the population who typically struggles in this aspect, even though qualifications may all be met. One of the main issues within why recidivism is so high is offenders' lack of stability post-incarceration and so they end up going through a chaotic cycle of crime, instability, and incarceration (Marsala Law Group, 2021). What this proposition encourages is the opposite of that cycle, intending to not only reduce recidivism but in turn, reduce incarceration rates and overall prison populations in the long term.

The topic of reducing recidivism is not a new one; however, in the past twenty years, information has been accumulated that shows our system and method for reducing crime and recidivism as a whole were flawed (Brookings, 2021). Our criminal justice system, from the start, was based upon a punitive approach, rather than addressing the problems that led to

unwanted, often criminal behavior. That is why this implementation is based upon this approach, as in some sense, you cannot prevent the negative outcome of prison for the already incarcerated populations, and so then, rather than giving up on those populations, becoming preemptive with their current situation is the next step (EKUOnlineLearning, 2015). This starts with looking into the reasons why they got into the system, the risk factors that will lead them back there upon release, and taking measurable, proven steps to put them into the best positions that not only avoid the negative outcomes but promote the greatest positive outcomes for them as it applies to their situations (Benson, 2003).

Currently, there are organizations that work to help people get prepared for getting a job upon release from prison, and there are even ways people can get degrees while serving their sentence, but it is rare. There are also nonprofit organizations that try to help people upon release, but they cannot help all the released populations as they are just not big enough at this point (Weinstein, 2022). An issue with this is the people being released can run into the situation of having nowhere to go and nothing to their name upon release. They may not realize there are resources available to them, and even if they do, it may not be a process that can assist them in the accelerated manner they would need if they are already released and struggling. This is not to say these organizations and programs are not beneficial, as they are, but the implementation into the prisons itself would make this more streamlined, and take the stress off both the offender population and the agencies attempting to help the cause (UNODC, 2019).

Focusing on the topic, which is how employment affects those who are formerly incarcerated, the idea was hatched to implement a career training center that resembles that of a college career center, while offering on-site training opportunities to those under incarceration. The idea behind this is that countless areas of research have shown there to be a great correlation

between lack of work and recidivism rates (Bennett & Ouazad, 2016). What we see time and time again is when offenders are not able to find consistency in work, typically, the rates at which people fall back into crime rise (Bennett & Ouazad, 2016). With this, the discussion would revolve around an action plan as to how to practically and ethically apply this career training center to prisons.

There is a method, laid out in five steps, that helps to break down an ethical dilemma so that it can be approached from a more ethical, and thorough perspective. The five steps went as such: identify the facts, identify relevant values and concepts, identify all possible dilemmas for each party involved, decide on the most immediate ethical issue, and then resolve the dilemma using an ethical system or some other means of decision-making. This was important to understand, specifically for this topic, because of the initial difficulty in finding where there could be an ethical or moral issue within the plan.

This program could potentially offer is a lower recidivism rate, less crowding in prison populations, and more acceptance for former offenders rehabilitating back into their communities (Prison to Employment Connection, 2022). However, through the use of tools to identify and analyze potential issues, the implementation's seamlessness had more questions than it had appeared at the initial look. The first issue that presented itself was funding. This program is going to cost money, and that money is going to have to be funded somehow, with the most likely and efficient means of this being through public taxation. To keep it blunt, the public pays for the programming through public taxation (Treasury.gov, 2023).

As is common knowledge, with rising taxes, there will always be people in support and people who are in opposition. Dealing with an issue that directly relates to people's salaries, and taking a part of their wealth to fund a project or program is going to bring up dilemmas. These

issues or dilemmas will further be compounded and under a microscope when people find out that the money is going toward the benefit of the incarcerated. In dealing with this issue, the resolution would be in what statistics tell us about former offenders when they do not find or receive work post-incarceration. What this implementation could potentially bring is different, as when it gains steam, the funding for this program could, in theory, reduce the funding needing to be put into the corrections system by taking reducing incarceration rates, thus creating money with a lesser need to house offenders (WSIPP, 2012).

The theory is that by putting more money into helping the formerly incarcerated, they then, in turn, could significantly reduce recidivism rates, diverting how much we have to be spending on corrections. To bring this idea to further light of understanding, a study from 2015 found the average cost of housing inmates in total per individual per year came out to be \$33,274 in the United States (Vera Institute of Justice, 2015). In turn, another study from 2016-2017 showed that the average budget of a career development center was about thirty-four thousand dollars, with the low average being around eighteen-thousand dollars and the upper average being two-hundred-thirty thousand dollars (NACE “National Association of Colleges and Employers”, 2017). These numbers show perspective budgeting per prisoner versus the implementation cost of adding a career program to a prison. What is evident from these statistics is even on the high end, it does not cost an extraordinary amount, especially when you consider how expensive it is to hold the population that it would serve.

The other piece is understanding that having a source of income has a profound impact on human life in total, including crime (Shannon, 2013). In a study analysis showing two groups, one with people who had gotten assigned to support jobs and the other who had not been given these jobs, people without support jobs were thirty-nine percent more likely to commit a crime,

with the article referencing robbery and burglary (Shannon, 2013). What was shown from this was that the reduced chance of arrest for these crimes was heavily related to the income people got from their jobs, or some other legal source such as welfare (Shannon, 2013).

One might ask what impact the implementation of a program such as this could make. This is where the greater impact can be seen. With the information received from the Bureau Of Justice Statistics (BJS), it is known that around sixty percent of formerly incarcerated people are jobless at this time. This report shows of the greater than 50,000 people who had been released from federal prisons in 2010, a third of them (33%) had found no employment four years post-release. Only 40 percent of former incarcerated were employed at any given time of these four years post-release (Wang & Bertram, 2022). This study also came shows that people who did find that the formerly incarcerated people who did find work during the four-year study period had an average of three and a half jobs in that period. This shows that they were unable to maintain work for varying reasons, including not offering job security or upward mobility (Wang & Bertram, 2022). To add to this information presented, in a 2008 study, it was found that once returning to the community, forty-eight percent of respondents wanted to participate in programs to improve their work skills but were unable, most commonly because they were unaware of the program availability, (Visher et al., 2011).

These two factors are important with the implementation of career programs in the prisons, it would immediately help to cut out the middleman issue surrounding offenders. Rather than putting this unnecessary stress on offenders, who upon release into the real world will likely already be gleaming with plenty of that, you bring the services to them and make it so when they walk out the prison gates, they aren't desperately searching for work opportunities as this has already been done with the program. This is proactive for the formerly incarcerated themselves

but provides great benefit to everyone within communities, including the criminal justice field (Weller et al., 2022). With ideal outcomes, this looks like less stress on active law enforcement, a decrease in crime due to less recidivism, less on corrections officers as this would help address prison overpopulation issues with fewer people re-offending, and less stress on communities with a drop in the crime rate due to less recurring of crime by offenders. These are not the only benefits; many of these programs outside of prison that help people are run through voluntary work, so there is an opportunity to bring those volunteer programs for job training directly to prisons which would also help to minimize the costs as well if that sort of partnership were able to be implemented (Garth-James, 2022).

This is all-important in understanding the significance the program could have as it is shown that formerly incarcerated persons who were able to maintain employment for the year post-release had a sixteen percent recidivism rate over three years, while those who did not have work had a fifty-two percent recidivism rate (Prison To Employment Connection, 2022). These numbers tell a story, one rooted in stability. When people, regardless of age lack stability, they suffer for it. This may appear to be a lone statistic, but it is backed up by numerous studies when you look into the relationship between recidivism and employment. A study from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics shows that just under seventy percent of prisoners released from state prisons were arrested for a new crime within three years and around seventy-seven percent within five years (Durose, et al., 2014). What this shows is that maybe a job isn't the sole reason for recidivism and crime, but it certainly can be a significant factor present in reducing recidivism rates as a whole.

Another ethical or moral dilemma that could be presented is the questioning of why money is spent to help people who have not served the community but rather done a disservice to

some level. In other words, there will be those in the minority who see that people who have harmed their communities enough to the point of imprisonment are provided benefits (ACLU, 2001). Utilitarianism says that we should focus on the outcome goals, which would be how to bring the greatest benefit to the majority to the greatest extent. In other words, the ethics of the situation are decided by if the consequences of said actions are good or bad (Pollock, 2019).

By giving prisoners this opportunity to build a foundation with potential jobs, there are benefits to the communities of the prisons as well. Sure there is a potential risk, but the numbers have been on disheartening over the decades with the rising prison populations of over 500 percent since the 1970s (The Sentencing Project, 2022). There is also the increase in costs run corrections with incarceration costs in states such as California in the 2010s costing upwards of 100,000 dollars (California Legislative Analyst's Office, 2022), and the statistics showing financial and social stability as a significant reason behind current recidivism rates. With the numbers presented in lowering recidivism, there can be a deeper emphasis on one of the big deterrents from crime, that being employment. Not only does this reduce the likelihood that former offenders will fall back into crime while the public would not have to pay for their further stay in prison, but also potentially begin to turn the tide and have people who at one time may not have been considered beneficial to the communities they wronged, into productive members of society. The reality is that doing nothing about the issue will lead to further increases in incarceration, and negative outcomes for both members of the community and the people who are stuck in this cycle of criminogenic behavior, or steps can be taken that have research to support them (Fornoff & Miller, 2017) The employment program may not be the complete solution to the incarceration issue, as it is a problem throughout the criminal justice system, but

there is undeniable potential to benefit offenders and provide positive outcomes nonetheless with its application (Wang & Bertram, 2022).

This is a serious issue of former offenders not being able to find employment. This is such an issue because as we know life stability and steady income through employment are significant factors in deterrence. Understanding that over sixty percent of prisoners that leave end back up in prison shows they don't have stability (State of Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, 2023). To even amplify that issue, in a recent study done on over 2.9 million former prisoners in the United States, within the first calendar year as much as fifty-five percent of them had not earned income with the median earnings being that of only ten-thousand dollars (Looney, 2018). The importance of this issue is more significant than most people would see at a surface level. Individuals who can't find work have much higher risk factors for returning to crime and thus returning to prison. What this means for the average individual is, by not taking care of these members of the community is the percentage of crime going to rise, but taxes in the big picture go up as that is how we pay to house inmates with most states averaging 25,000 to 35,000 dollars a year per cost of the incarcerated individual (Stephens, 2021).

The picture that should be painfully clear is that by not helping these people and giving them opportunities, everyone will be worse off and will see negative outcomes as a result. Whether physically, mentally, or monetarily affected by the issue present here, the opportunity for change and to produce better results from this situation is there, as it has always been, and that is by helping. Like many issues today, people seek to take shortcuts, in the case of these individuals, those shortcuts are letting them fail by providing no opportunity, and when they do fail, putting them right back into the system of incarceration that amplified their problems in the first place.

With the need for a change made apparent, the proposition would be to incorporate a career center into our prison system to guide and help these people in the system inevitably find full-time work when they enter back into society. The idea behind this implementation stems from a similar position of how colleges have career work with their students to get the student both prepared to begin a career and help in finding where the individual can fit in with certain companies or career paths.

The role of this implemented department would not just be to help people find what they want to do, but also to provide training to gain certification if a field required that, and finally, the program would reach out to potential employers on the individual's behalf if they made it through the programming to help the individual build a connection. Connecting and networking are maybe one of the most important things that are stressed at the college level and although it wouldn't be quite the same from inside of incarceration, there are more than enough technological advancements to be able to make these connections through electronic or digital platforms.

Understanding that many people in prison come from a poverty-level income which is backed up by a 2014 study that showed before incarceration, prisoners had a medium income of just under twenty thousand dollars which is just over 40% less than that the focus of incorporating a career center provides benefits that simply would not be an option for most individuals. This program promotes accessibility first and would be a progressive means to working in solving the issue of former offenders finding work that provides a steady stream of income.

With a proposition that could become a fundamental part of the local prison system, it is of the utmost importance to identify the stakeholders. The first policyholder would be local

government, in this particular case, state government if that is the outreach for the implementation to start. The local government in this case would be the Minnesota Department of Justice Branch as they have the role of ensuring the fair treatment of offenders in incarceration. The other reason this stakeholder is important is that there is no way for this proposition to get anywhere unless the local government passes and adds this policy to our prisons.

As well as local government, you would have to convince the prisons or corrections that this would make fundamental changes to the outcome of individuals released from their correctional facilities. Another stakeholder would be the companies that you align yourself with through the career center program implemented in prisons. These companies would be making huge contributions to individuals potentially turning their lives around, yet at the same time, it can't be ignored that they too are the ones who take the risk when they decided to hire former criminals. This group would potentially be the most affected stakeholder as they would be the ones directly affected by the introduction of the new policy.

The last stakeholder would have to be the general public. Their money goes into funding for a prison program like this through taxes and so they would be impacted in that manner. They are also in part impacted in the sense that if this works in the manner it is intended and does reduce crime, as well as recidivism then it is hard to not see the benefit. Understanding there are two outlooks to every situation, there are certainly potential issues that these stakeholders may have in buying into this programming. The local government may be interested in lowering crime, but they also already put a lot of money annually into prisons. In a 2015 study that showed different states and what they spend on prisons, the numbers showed Minnesota in one of the upper thresholds with over four hundred million dollars spent on prison expenditures, to

put this into greater perspective they listed each inmate cost of the upper thresholds with over four hundred million dollars spent on prison expenditures, to put this into greater perspective they listed each inmate cost on average just over forty-one thousand dollars (Vera Institute of Justice, 2015). The immediate argument would be that this plan is to spend money to save money plan. If recidivism is lowered, that means fewer people in the system, meaning less total expenditure, which would infer that the program was a success.

For prisons, it is hard to see what they might have issues within this programming if it truly works as intended, but a possible argument they could make is that since offenders can't be forced to use the resources, and since this program relies on cooperation, then the funding that goes into producing these career center programs could in part go to waste. What can't be guaranteed is the program would be groundbreaking right from the start, but what can be guaranteed is of those who participate and buy, they can be set up in situations where they can get a job or career started early on after prison, thus minimizing much of the risk factors related to monetary issues that typically lead people back to criminal behavior (Prison to Employment Connection, 2022). It can't be ignored that a person who has a steady stream of income is going to have a much higher likelihood of dealing with stress in a healthy way than someone who doesn't have income with the research presented thus far. There is a mental health aspect here that if we help to provide, with time the reports of mental health will be lowered (National Institute of Justice, 2021) Many studies show a high correlation between mental health and employment, one such study was done in 2019 by (Miquel et al., 2022) and the findings show a strong link between mental health and employment. An analysis of this journal summed up one of the main points well in saying, good mental health is a key influence on employability, finding a job and remaining in that job unemployment causes stress, which ultimately has long-term

physiological health effects and can have negative consequences for people's mental health, including depression, anxiety, and lower self-esteem (de Miquel et al., 2022). The final group of the general public population could have concerns with this program affecting their tax rates. To this, the answer is simple and brief, it may cost a little more for us all to fund this endeavor, however, the money it has the potential to save and the lowering of crime it could potentially have outside of prisons should be well worth it.

This change is not something that does come without certain legal implications. The first issue that may need to be addressed is the risk companies take on in hiring former offenders, and how they could take on a risk like the one presented. To this question, there is a rather simple, referring back to the highly successful Federal Bonding Program.

Essentially this government-run agency is there to help individuals in this country who have fallen on hard times, including former felons seeking work, as well as the companies that may be interested in hiring the individual. This program protects employers from dishonest, fraudulent, or other criminal acts done on behalf of the bonded employee. Currently, each bond has a \$5000 limit with zero deductible and would then cover the first six months of the individual's selected employment, which is important because this is shown to be the period that if something were to go wrong, it would show itself during this time (The Federal Bonding Program, 2022). This bonding program would work well pairing directly with the newly implemented prison career centers because all of these people will need employment upon release, and if there isn't some sort of situation already set up, this could help to streamline former offenders directly from the career centers learning programs into work. The employer would have further incentive to hire an individual with the first half-year essentially being insured, and thus we would create a system that isn't independent and could directly work with

the Federal Bonding System in getting former offenders steady employment (The Federal Bonding Program, 2022).

It's important to know that these bonds can be applied to any job in any state so this also works well with the prison career centers in that it doesn't have to be a minimized field of jobs, and working directly with the Federal Bonding Agency could open up opportunities for a high variation in work opportunities (The Federal Bonding Program, 2022). For this topic of finding employment for people who have criminal records, there is a law that would certainly help in this process as there is a direct relation to what the prison career center combined with the partnership of the Federal Bond Program, this being the Ban the Box law.

According to the Minnesota government website, "Ban the Box requires employers to consider a job candidate's skills and experiences before asking about an applicant's criminal record. The employer must wait until the applicant has been selected for an interview or until a conditional job offer has been extended. The law is commonly known as "ban the box," referencing the elimination of a check box question on an application asking applicants if they have a criminal record" (MN Department of Human Rights, 2023, p.1). This is a law that Minnesota does enforce which would work to the benefit of the prison career center as well as its hierarchic goals of lowering recidivism, crime, money spent on incarceration, as well as individuals' struggles in getting out of the ruthless cycle that can be seen in the U.S. legal system. The reasoning behind this law is when people have had to check the box for criminal history in the past, employers would immediately decide that this person would not work for them (MN Department of Human Rights, 2023). What this does is shows an employer an individual can be qualified and then allows former offenders to explain why they are looking for the job now. This idea would be amplified through the career center as you would have people who could speak on

progress and make the connections before the interview so that when an individual does come in for that interview portion, this could make it so no parties potentially feel blindsided.

This prison career center would be straightforward implementation as certain prisons in the United States have implemented similar ideas to their systems. The cost of this implementation in the big picture is a minimal issue, it will save money in the long game and is government-funded, meaning it will be paid for through taxation. This taxation spread across communities will not create spectacular differences in what people are being taxed but will create tremendous, positive impacts in our communities, in prisons, and of course for the people who can't find work with their criminal history.

The implementation of this program does have a significant impact on communities. Statistics from Pew Research Center show that of the adults in prison currently, sixty-seven percent of them will recidivate or re-offend (University of Missouri, 2011). However, Jack Cronin, an analyst for the institute of public policy studies Missouri prison data, his findings showed prisoners who got their GED were more likely to find a job and less likely to recidivate. The extent of this is shown even more so when the numbers are presented as individuals who did get their GED and got jobs after the prison had their recidivism rate drop down to thirty-three percent, quite literally cutting the rates down to half (University of Missouri, 2011).

The takeaway here is phenomenal in that it is education, training, and getting these former offenders jobs not only monumentally impacts them, but it lowers crime rates outside of prisons as far less recidivism occurs, as well as benefiting the government in that there is no more money from the said individual making its way back into the economy. This change could help everyone from individuals to law enforcement and prisons, to communities, and so on (University of Missouri, 2011).

These studies show that there are certainly other factors that can help individuals stay out of the system, but inevitably training/education and employment have a proven maximizing effect. This implementation doesn't change our whole system, it is an addition that can have adverse positive effects in bringing us closer to solving the issue of recidivism as well as possibly bringing big changes to our overcrowded prisons at the same time. This implementation provides far more benefit, especially in the long run when you look at the big picture compared to possible faults and can be strong action taken toward addressing a longstanding problem within our criminal justice system.

With the implementation of career centers in prison, the first and potentially most important step is fully understanding the concept that is going to be made as an addition. This allows the confidence so that when it does come time to present it to both the people that are directly and indirectly affected by the implementation, speaking confidently, and lie out the plan of action to support the addition of the program (Warrell, 2017). The focus will be having effective leadership that is willing to learn and incorporate different ways of thinking about longstanding issues. As mentioned previously, with the dilemmas that could arise, there will always be pushback. This is in part because by the nature of something new being added to an establishment, people have done things a specific way for potentially a long time. Presentation of the statistics that back the program will have a great impact on criminal justice professionals. Sway the audience through belief in what you are promoting as well as having factual research to back up the potential of your program for effective change while having minimal barriers to introducing a new stimulus to an already existing establishment (Warrell, 2017).

There are going to be those who push back because there are long-time professionals in the field, and so that could lead to issues in having pushback surrounding potential changes.

However, anyone in the criminal justice field who is in it for the right reasons should be able to set aside their pride when presented with the research that supports the new changes and the benefits that come along with it. The most proficient workers are lifelong learners, and when we try to stay stagnant, we forgo the growth potential. The thought behavior link shows that thoughts have a direct correlation to behavior, and so if you can sway people's thoughts then you can potentially sway buy-in to new organizational change (APA.org, 2020).

The other piece to this is understanding that pushback means the presentation of questions related to the “why” behind the implementation, and what it offers to the organization that enacts it. To employ career development centers ethically and morally in prisons, it would be of the utmost importance that you address the issues that could arise (Fries, 2018). As a leader in a scenario like this, the job is to not only convince the staff of the benefits the application of the program can bring but also the prison populations themselves, as that is the population that will define the potential for success or failure of the program. What is the benefit of a program that nobody uses? Making sure people know the effectiveness this program can have, and if that does not bring people in, providing evidence of how fundamental what they gain post-incarceration, is extraordinarily important to attempt in getting the interest of the prison populations (Fries, 2018).

Funding for a program, such as this, would mainly be through taxation, and though this would without a doubt upset some people, if successful, by lowering the prison populations due to successful re-implementation into society, the money once spent on individual prisoners would slowly go down over time (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). The potential the program could provide is that we lower what is put into housing and rehousing former offenders by investing in them with the job program. The placement of emphasis put more into helping individuals

succeed rather than using their time within incarceration solely, as just that without question would bring greater long-term benefits to prisons, communities, and of course, the individuals who have done their time and are released from their incarceration periods (Kethineni & Falcone, 2007).

Prior, it was mentioned there are programs outside of prisons that do something similar to this already, many being nonprofit such as 180 Degrees, Amicus Project Reconnect, or localized ones, such as the Central Minnesota Re-Entry Project that all offer opportunities, specifically for those who struggle due to the criminal record (Keller Law Offices, 2021). Potentially, there could be a partnership with one of these organizations as well aside from federal bonds to implement what they do within the prisons themselves, as this could help even further with their mission as well as the projects' missions of putting the focus on helping former offenders reinstate themselves back into healthy societal norms (Couloute & Kopf, 2018).

To ensure ethical action is being done both in the prisons themselves and with the implementation of the career service center, there must be accountability on all levels. This would mean that ideally, there is self-accountability and that people hold themselves to the highest standards, as they should in criminal justice, but not only that, holding others accountable must be at the forefront of the policy during this implementation (Opportunity Agenda, 2013). This is the much more difficult of the two because typically this means that you are holding your peers, sometimes friends, accountable and calling them out when their actions are unethical and do not match the policy. In an organization, when leaders see immoral or unethical behavior and choose not to acknowledge it or call it out, this is essentially giving one's blessing that the behavior is acceptable. To have a company that holds itself to the highest standards, high morality, and courage are necessary to not only be accountable for your behavior but to be able

to say and do something when it is somebody else's behavior as well (Opportunity Agenda, 2013).

On the note of personal accountability, the Stewardship Principles can be applied here as well. The four principles are ownership, responsibility, accountability, and reward. These principles have biblical significance, but the first principle, ownership, essentially means taking hold of what task is given and bringing it to completion. When taking ownership is part of giving efforts toward aligned interests. Responsibility and accountability work together hand in hand to create a chain of trust and loyalty not only on an individual aspect but to uphold the overall goal of the organizations. And finally, the reward is essentially the outcome of what work we have put in (Glover, 2022). The outcome, good or bad, is based upon the work and effort that precedes it. These principles are a step-by-step process of implementing positive patterns, that can certainly be applied to something like what this paper has focused on, but are not limited to just one thing, and can be carried into countless aspects of our lives (Glover, 2022).

The topic presented within the paper is implementing evidence-based practices into the Capstone, which for review, is inputting a career center of sorts into prisons, with the research behind it pointing toward offenders finding and maintaining work post-incarceration to be a significant factor in lowering their rates and the chance of recidivism. The two evidence-based practices that are going to be at the front of emphasis in the implementation process are cognitive behavioral intervention and (Risk, Need, and Responsivity) "RNR" principles.

The foundation of an idea like creating job opportunities for former offenders is already one that is sure to receive scrutiny; however, with the addition of principles founded on multiple fronts of research that support their proficiency, it should make it so that the arguments for

pushback are minimal. The choice of cognitive behavioral intervention is about understanding what leads people to think in the way they do, and then helping to change the thought patterns, with the results leading to a change in behaviors. This helps help offenders understand the harmful thought patterns they have been, and then in turn, helps the professionals to assist them in changing them (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

The benefit to this is clear in that targeting the negative behaviors that in the past would lead them toward the path that brought them to adverse outcomes, they can unlearn these harmful behaviors and thought processes intending to have more positive results, post-incarceration (Public Safety Canada, 2018). RNR is similarly tied into the cognitive behavior intervention tactic, in that you assess the risks of the specific clientele being worked with. In short, these could be what are the potential factors that could lead to negative outcomes for this individual, such as home life, erratic tendencies, etc (May, Ph.D., 2021). The need is then how hard and fast you begin to treat the individual. The reason for this step is that people do not respond to treatment in the same manner, as some will need lighter treatment, while others need a more aggressive format (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

The likelihood of an individual making the necessary changes on their own is as unlikely as telling a first-time driver to take you on a road trip and expecting it to be a successful ride. Ideally, you can prevent crime rather than live in the aftermath and one such study done in Liberia and being replicated in the U.S. shows great promise in which young men at high risk for violent crime are allowed to try a program. The program called Sustainable Transformation of Youth in Liberia uses cognitive behavioral therapy over eight weeks and gives out cash in the form of 200 dollars (Samuel, 2022). To test the effectiveness of the program they took 999 of the most dangerous men in Monrovia and split them into four groups, the first group received

money, the second received cognitive behavioral therapy, the third received both and the fourth received neither (Samuel, 2022). The group who received both money and treatment after a year, crime and violence was down 50 percent in that group, and again after ten years the numbers remained nearly identical, right around that 50 percent reduction (Samuel, 2022). What they found through their best hypothesis was the money gave them some extra stability to be able to practice the new cognitive behavioral skills they had learned, which meant they had time to practice legal, pro-social behaviors, and they stuck (Samuel, 2022). They reference a few other successful studies that utilized cognitive behavioral intervention/ treatment, and that is one of the big focuses. Cognitive behavioral intervention does work and this article shows the cost-effectiveness with treatment costing just over 500 dollars per person, which in this scenario equated to costing \$1.50 per crime avoided (Samuel, 2022).

Cognitive behavioral intervention is not magic, it isn't a sure thing, but its benefit is proven and utilized more and more through continued successes in varying experiments such as the one above. With this in mind, incorporating cognitive behavior intervention into the programming means that you offer an opportunity to change a way of thinking while providing stability in the form of work. The summarized goal of cognitive behavioral intervention is to change thought patterns which leads to a change in people's behavior. With this idea, the focus will explain how the principle of cognitive-behavioral interventions, along with the theories and tools that stem from it, will work alongside the proposed prison employment program, in offering offenders the greatest opportunity to not only stay out of the prison system but to thrive once they are released through working to improve upon criminogenic needs that lead to the undesirable outcomes (Hofmann et al., 2012).

To briefly touch on employment as it relates to crime occurrence will be important moving forward. In an article about the relationship between job displacement and crime by Patrick Bennett and Amine Ouazad from 2016, their research showed a significant impact of a rise in crime from unintended displacement, they go into this further by saying, “Displaced individuals are significantly more likely to commit a crime which leads to a conviction post-displacement, but not in the time leading up to displacement. This impact is predominantly driven by an impact of job displacement on property crimes, which increase by about 26% of the population-wide average, and is economically and statistically significant up to seven years following displacement. Consistent with the literature on education and crime, the impact on crime is driven by those with low education – high school or less and, to a lesser extent, vocational education – where those with university education experience no increases in crime post-displacement” (Bennett & Ouazad, 2016, para.8). The trend follows suit as when offenders do not have stability in the form of employment, the rates of recidivism are all but certain to rise in an impactful way. There is a specific way that we can ensure that offenders receive the best treatment they can, and that starts with evidence-based models.

The evidence-based model that is backed and has near certainty to help lower recidivism rates at this point is that of the Risk, Need, and Responsivity principles or RNR. The risk part of this principle is about determining who needs greater supervision, essentially you match the supervision level with the risk of offending (Mereness, 2022). This principle states you match high risk with greater supervision and likewise low risk with lower supervision, as studies show when you begin matching low-risk offenders with supervision higher than they need, then the intent of the supervision fails, and the risk of offending increases (Mereness, 2022). The need principle focuses on specific targets of services that revolve around criminogenic needs. In the

RNR principle, there are eight centralized criminogenic needs; criminal history, employment/education, family marital, leisure/ recreation, companions, alcohol/drug problems, pro-criminal attitude, and antisocial personality patterns (Mereness, 2022). For the needs principle, you determine what behaviors need supervision. This saves time from wasting possible treatment on areas where individuals may not need as much help, instead focusing on areas in need or problem areas and providing more efficient overall treatment.

The responsivity principle focuses on matching the style and mode of intervention to the abilities, motivation, and learning style of the offender. In other words, the treatment is tailored to the client's preferred learning style (Mereness, 2022). All three sections of RNR are meant to work to both the benefit of the client and the individual working with the client, as when working to the client's strengths, not only is it easier for them to pick up on, but it becomes more specified for the individuals helping the offender, thus making the treatment process more focused. To specify this, instead of placing effort into broad treatment, the specific treatment is specified and based upon individual needs.

This can be highlighted in a Canadian-based program evaluated by research from the year 2000 headed by James Bonta, Suzanne Capretta, and Jennifer Rooney. What they found is that in the study, low-risk offenders matched with low minimal treatment had recidivism rates of 15%, while low-risk offenders compared with intensive treatment had doubled the rates of recidivism with a rate of 32% (BONTA et al., 2000). Likewise, high-risk offenders who received minimal treatment had a recidivism rate of over 50%, in contrast, the high-risk offenders who received intensive treatment, their recidivism rates dropped to 32% (BONTA et al., 2000). This part of the study focuses on the risk piece to the assessment but specifies the need for specialized programming based on the level of risk the individual is at for offending or reoffending.

Specifically, in the "Needs" section of RNR, we see that employment, education, as well as recreational needs, are the areas of focus that are the biggest risk factors in seeing if somebody is likely to return to criminalistic behaviors (Bourgon, 2013). There has been comprehensive research as well as real-world testing done with the RNR principles. The RNR principles have been shown to work when using just one of the three principles, but are greatly effective when all three pieces of the principle are used (Bourgon, 2013). When a minimum of one RNR principle treatment method was applied, there was a three percent decrease in recidivism; when two principles were applied, there was a seventeen percent reduction, and when all three principles were applied, there was at minimum a twenty-five percent reduction in recidivism rates (Bourgon, 2013). In contrast, when the RNR principles were not enacted or adhered to, there was an increase of two percent in recidivism (Bourgon, 2013). Here are two different studies, though with a variation in their statistics, that essentially show the same thing; the inclusion of these principles has a significant positive impact on offenders' tendencies to re-offend.

From these studies done by Andrews and Bonta, we can see that the RNR principle not only should be a recommendation when treating offenders, but with what these statistics show, it should be the standard in treatment principles. There has been pushback on this principle method as well as other evidence-based practices because they are relatively newer concepts that have picked up in recent years, and the majority of people who have not used them have been doing the methods they're doing for a long time, and consider themselves experts in areas of treatment, so it can be easy to see where a disconnect may initiate (BONTA et al., 2000). What the facts show is that at the end of the day, the RNR principles are highly efficient, and if there are systems that are not using the RNR principles, they are also not getting the same or better

efficiency out of what they are using, which is extremely unlikely, then pride has to be dropped, and the switch has to be implemented (BONTA et al., 2000).

It should be noted that the RNR principles in these hyper-focused study scenarios have shown to be more effective, almost twice that of when applied to real-world scenarios and departments, due to the willingness to accept the new way training and apply it in the manner most effective (Public Safety Canada, 2018). There are potential training professionals, that when utilized in real-world scenarios, do provide more significant, lab-like results, and when organizations have followed through with incorporating the RNR principles as well as the professional training and procedures that come with it, they, too, have found that increased effectiveness, similar to that in the specified studies (Public Safety Canada, 2018).

When talking about offenders, two thought chains are of vast importance to understanding, these chains being the patterns of pro-social and antisocial behavior (May, Ph.D., 2021). This is important to criminology and specifically to cognitive behavioral interventions because the whole point of this concept is to change thoughts from pro-criminal thoughts into pro-social thoughts. Why emphasize thoughts, one might ask? Because thoughts directly convey actions, likewise, actions affect thoughts. A behavior chain, as it relates to psychology, is the sequence of responses following an initial event that leads to an outcome based on our thought patterns throughout (May, Ph.D., 2021). These behavior chains are a vital part of cognitive behavioral intervention because the research behind this shows that when we change the way we think, we can change our behavior, which in turn changes our actions; ideally, turning those antisocial behaviors into prosocial behaviors (May, Ph.D., 2021).

To implement the cognitive behavioral intervention, it has to be broken down. Cognitive behavioral interventions are made up of two parts, those being cognitive behavioral restructuring

and cognitive skills. Cognitive restructuring teaches people to look and pay attention to internal thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs, recognizing when thoughts are antisocial (Mereness, 2022). Breaking down cognitive restructuring, the first part is paying attention to our thinking; then we have to recognize risk within thoughts and finally have to alter thinking or use a new way to think that reduces risk.

So, coming back to the behavior chain, there is a scenario, the feelings that come from that situation, thoughts that arise from the situation, actions taken, and consequences or the aftermath of the behavior process/reaction. So, an example of this could be to view both pro-social and antisocial behavior chains from one incident such as one person seeing another's wallet drop from their pocket while walking on the street. From a pro-social perspective, it may feel sympathetic, or worried for the individual, and may think "Oh no, he dropped his wallet if that was me, I know I'd freak out". The response to this would be to go pick up the wallet and return it to the individual who dropped it. And the consequence or outcome could be that the individual is very thankful. In the same scenario, from an antisocial perspective, perhaps the first feelings we get are excitement. The thoughts may be more along the lines of, "Sweet, it's my lucky day, that is money I didn't have to do anything for". The action would be walking over to the wallet and taking it, along with the money. And the consequence outcome in this scenario may be to have gotten some money, however, the money is stolen from somebody else and made for a bad situation for them. On top of this, if you have stolen, there is a chance of getting in trouble if it were to be found out. Both behaviors would be consistent as how to think about one thing is typically going to be a similar process to how we think about everything, with a study showing that pro-social thoughts positively correlate to prosocial behavior (Ding et al., 2018).

This clearly would lead to more positive outcomes for the pro-social behavior chain and more risk on the antisocial behavior chain.

The second piece to Cognitive Behavioral Intervention is cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are abundant, and they are the abilities we use in scenarios that involve other people, such as active listening, compromising, giving feedback, and knowing our emotions (Mereness, 2022). A significant piece of cognitive skills is problem-solving and learning to deal with stressors and challenges of scenarios that occur throughout our lives. The benefit that can be learned from cognitive emotional intervention is huge for offenders.

The concept itself isn't all too far from one that was taught to youth in the form of stop and think, or stop, think, and act (Life Skills Advocate, 2021). What this does is allows oneself to think about a situation before acting can be the complete difference between positive and negative outcomes, in short, it gives people time to think about a decision before making it and is commonly taught in some form thorough adolescence school programs (Life Skills Advocate, 2021).

In a cognitive review of over 290 studies the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that cognitive-based treatments and evidence-based practices, when applied to offender populations, resulted in significant decreases in recidivism (WSIPP, 2006). There were many varying areas of focus, but as it relates to the general prison population when cognitive behavioral therapy was employed in a group setting in over 25 studies, it was found that the programs significantly reduced recidivism by over eight percent (WSIPP, 2006). The two reasons that these practices found so much success is that for one, the programs were specified to individuals' needs. As stated before, when placing people into a general program without considering their individual needs for the programming, they are essentially wasting time as the

most likely outcome of this is that the treatment won't help the offender, but rather hurt them in the long run, this is why what many of these newer studies have in common is program specificity, with the treatment fitting to the individuals rather than the individuals being forced into a specific treatment style. Working with individuals and fitting into the program that best fits what they need and the intensity at which they need it, has been shown to lead to significant positive changes in recidivism rates (WSIPP, 2006). The second is that, comparatively, the programs that work the best are the evidence-based ones. There are programs out there that don't work, but, when we look into evidence-based programming, it is clear that this is the way to change the rates of recidivism, as well as lower overall offender incarceration (WSIPP, 2006).

With this further understanding of the thought-behavior link, the discussion focuses on how this could be applied to a criminal justice field of work. Having worked in security, the value of having security workers understand the thought-behavior link, as well as, the other principles that align with it could have a deep impact. There are a significant amount of people on the streets who have mental health issues or trauma, many of whom do have criminal records with data collected in the 2010s showing that around 30 percent of homeless were diagnosed with a mental disorder and 50 percent with substance abuse problems (SAMHSA, 2011). The role of level-1 security is to observe and report, but when instances arise, the best thing to do is to try to douse the flames or calm down the situation of the individuals involved. If a situation is approached with hostility, then oftentimes, the responding behavior is amplified by hostility back at the projector.

By understanding that their behavior stems from ideas and thoughts, those who specialize in all fields of criminal justice work backward in a sense through the thought-behavior link, ideally bringing a possibly negative situation to a more positive conclusion. If a security officer

can understand that this behavior may stem from an experience the individual has gone through, maybe they can, too, think differently and approach the situation from a different angle that creates more desired outcomes. This idea of changing how to think does not have to be solely for people who are getting into trouble, but also for the people who respond to that trouble. When beginning to understand why someone is behaving the way they are, then the behavioral approach to the situation can be handled more appropriately.

Returning to the job search prison implementation program, with the introduction of cognitive-behavior therapy, would not only be of benefit to the program itself but would provide additional skills to individuals involved that could help them with better decision-making as they are released into the general population again as this is one of the functions to this (Mayo Clinic, 2019). The pieces that could benefit the proposed program, and be a part of cognitive-behavioral interventions are the combination of cognitive restructuring and cognitive skills as well as the eight criminogenic needs/risks.

When looking into the big eight criminogenic needs, there are factors present directly or indirectly related to the incorporation of the employment program, these needs or risks being the history of antisocial behavior, antisocial personality patterns, antisocial cognition, antisocial associates, family/marital, school/work, leisure recreation, and substance abuse (Andrews & Dowden, 2007, p. 446). Focusing on one of them, the clear, direct connection to the program involves the school/work portion, but with any offender, the likelihood of more than one of these being present is increased. Being that employment education is evidence-based as one of the eight most important risk factors, this would be important for educating offenders who joined the program to stress the importance of them taking advantage of the opportunity understanding that

though work is one of the eight risk factors to look for when talking about the potential for deviant behavior (Andrews & Dowden, 2007).

D.A. Andrews and Craig Dowden have studied various counts of research on this and published the results of RNR-based treatment in their article, *The Risk Need Responsivity Model Of Assessment and Human Service in Prevention and Corrections: A Crime Prevention Jurisprudence*. It states when people lack work, this can lead to detrimental outcomes as a lack of income can make for necessary aspects of life such as food or shelter, and can be a negative stress inducer (Andrews & Dowden, 2007). Their research shows outright that non-adherence to RNR principles is likely to lead to undesirable outcomes saying, “We stress the overall finding: Adhering to the RNR model is associated with reduced recidivism, while non-adherence is associated with either increased recidivism or null effects on re-offending” (Andrews & Dowden, 2007, p. 454). This, however, presented is an effective method for treatment if the goals for criminal justice align with the idea of decreasing recidivism. This however cannot be applied unless adopted by agencies and implemented through professional training adhering to the guidelines that fall within the Risk-Need-Responsivity treatment principles.

By providing job opportunities, you potentially lower recidivism rates by providing financial stability, along with additional cognitive behavioral programming; this could be a monumental impact on changing the lives of former offenders, while also addressing the incarceration issue by proxy, as lower recidivism means fewer offenses and fewer people going to jail for those offenses (Henry-Nickie, 2021). In learning about cognitive restructuring, offenders would benefit from learning to understand when their thoughts are more anti-social and when they are pro-social as that is key to changing how we think. The tool of the behavior chain additionally not only helps people recognize their thoughts and emotions but also how to respond

to those thoughts in a way that provides more prosocial outcomes. This would be useful to offenders in continuing to change these unwanted behaviors. The final piece to this is building those cognitive skills. This tool would help not only maintain a job as well as making the transition back into society easier. Maybe even more importantly, when issues present themselves, then the offender who has received this knowledge and treatment will be able to problem-solve the situation. Because the training leads to more self-awareness for keeping control of their emotions, they can reduce anti-social thought patterns which as said are one of the most significant risk factors out of the eight criminogenic needs as it relates to correlation in research to criminalistic behavior (Andrews & Dowden, 2007).

When applying for this program, two key considerations that come into play are going to be funding and implementing evidence-based practices. This certainly could be argued against with greater funding having to go into programming to see results similar to that of the lab studies conducted around cognitive social treatment and RNR. In the long run, putting money into this program with the added cognitive-behavioral treatment will save the corrections system a lot of money long term. In Minnesota, it costs on average about 41,000 dollars a year to house an inmate (Vera Institute of Justice, 2015).

This means that is a significant saving with each successful individual kept out of prison. As for the budget to have a functioning career center, the national association of colleges and employers shows that on the low end, the budget for these programs in the 75th percentile range is 32,000 dollars while the highest end average was just over 300,000 dollars (National Association of Colleges and Employees, 2017). What this shows is depending on the level of budget chosen for a program such as this, each prisoner that is successful through the program and does not recede in crime either pays entirely for the budget of the center on the lowest end or

the high end pays for the cost of a 10th of the center, as the money that would be used for holding the prisoners would then become available. Understanding that people in the system can be housed, fed, and medicated, this money saved from investing in those individuals' successful graduation from the prison system could in part turn into more funding available for other areas of corrections, but more research is needed in this area to know for sure.

The final piece is implementing the new practices, which would likely receive pushback. With this, it will take time and patience, as there are professionals who have done things a certain way in the criminal justice field for a long time, however, with evidence-based practices, we see the success rates, and they cannot be ignored. Inevitably, if somebody is in the field for the right reasons, they will get on board with what is proven to work consistently, rather than what is comfortable and familiar to them.

This topic is essential for corrections because there is this recycling issue of recidivism and prison overpopulation in the United States. There are certainly many factors involved in this and certainly not what anyone wants; however, this is where the issue is at and has remained for decades (Bonczar, 2003). To make significant changes to these problems, there has to be a change to the approach by people within the profession and by the legislators who have not provided the means to wholeheartedly address these profound problems. The other aspect of this is how lowering rates of recidivism affect criminal justice professionals and the communities themselves with lower rates of crime and overall public safety (Dummermuth, 2019). You simultaneously create an opportunity to take less stress off of law enforcement while also providing reformed members to the community that potentially could become outstanding members of society.

Overall, the opportunity to utilize proven methods of countering harmful behavior in a program has the potential to provide stability for people after they are released from prison. Not only is an opportunity provided to these former offenders, but with the adoption of the RNR principles, as well as the cognitive behavioral intervention techniques, tools are also provided to individuals to assess potential risk factors that could jeopardize opportunities after their incarceration period leading into more prosocial outcomes (Ding et al., 2018).

The research put into this project has been about the relationship between employment and offender recidivism. The goal was to find the importance of former offenders finding work upon release, as it relates to the rate of reduction in recidivism. It has been well established that employment offers stability and opportunity for living beyond poverty in the United States through various writing and research opportunities (Marsala Law Group, 2021). When there is a lack of steady employment in one's life, the statistics show the propensity for criminalistic behavior significantly rises. Beyond just how unemployment affects former offenders, it has a serious impact on non-offenders as well. Understanding this relationship is extremely important moving forward (Marsala Law Group, 2021). It has been well documented and previously touched upon what positive impacts finding steady employment can do on former offenders. Understanding that there is research showing that offenders can make a comeback from incarceration, but to make this possible, for the majority of cases, it is necessary for there to be some external intervention (Keller Law Offices, 2021).

Unpacking the entirety of this topic, what is shown is recidivism does not have to be a sure thing for offenders. By incorporating treatment such as cognitive behavior intervention, social-behavioral treatment, or Risk-Need-Responsivity principles, the offenders' chances of recidivism drop exponentially and their likelihood of being able to adapt outside of prisons rise.

Pairing with these treatments, having a steady stream of work and income helps to resolve many of the issues that offender populations face upon their reentry into society. With the incorporation of skills and career development centers into prisons, rather than waiting until offenders are out of prisons to start this process, what presents itself is the opportunity to streamline the successes of the offender population who do find consistent work, making financial, mental, and emotional stability far more realistic for themselves. With these implementations, or likewise thought processes applied toward our justice system, we will begin to chip away and long time issues present in the system and create more positive outcomes for future generations of the world.

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