Managing the Transition from Institution to Community: A Canadian Parole Officer Perspective on the Needs of Newly Released Federal Offenders

Jason D. Brown
University of Manitoba

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to describe the needs of newly released federal offenders as perceived by community parole officers. Seventy-four parole officers were asked to answer the following question: "What do offenders need to succeed in the first 90 days after release?" The data were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. Seven clusters resulted. In the first cluster, food, clothing, and shelter were identified as well as health and transportation needs. In the second cluster, life skills including problem-solving, and budgeting skills were reported. The third cluster included education and employment assistance. In the fourth cluster, the need for correctional programs was identified. The fifth cluster described the need for offenders to have insight into their problem areas. In the sixth cluster, preparation for community supervision during incarceration was described. The seventh cluster described the need for structure of parole decreasing over time. The results are generally consistent with the available literature, indicating that parole officer assessment of offender needs following release into the community is based on factors that have been identified in previous research.

KEYWORDS: community; parole; Canada; offenders; concept map.

There is clearly a commitment in jurisdictions across North America to the community supervision of offenders (Petersilia 2001). Articles have been written on this topic, making "personal responsibility" (Horn, 2000), cost investment (Travis and Petersilia 2001), and selectively resourced (Austin, 2001) arguments for managing the risk of offenders who are under supervision in the community. For those offenders granted a period of community supervision following incarceration, the reintegration issues they face are central to understanding effective risk management (Helfgott 1997). Risk management in the community is measured in part by ability to follow expectations set out by the community parole officer and the rules set out by the National Parole Board, which may have granted an early release. Violations of these expectations, rules, and the law do occur frequently, particularly in the first two to three months after release. These violations can result in a period of re-incarceration, at times, as long as the original sentence for those who were granted early release.

There is considerable evidence in the literature to contradict the argument that "nothing works" in offender rehabilitation (McGuire 2002). While punitive measures have received little support, psychosocial treatment effects, in general, are positive (Redondo, Sanchez-Meca, Garrido 2002). Interventions that do not target needs associated with criminal behavior – non-criminogenic needs - such as vague personal or emotional problems, self-esteem, therapy groups that increase cohesiveness among offenders, and showing respect for anti-social thinking do not have significant positive impact on offender recidivism (McGuire, 2002). However, targeting needs associated with re-offense – "criminogenic needs" (Andrews and Bonta 2003; Gendreau, Little and Goggin, 1996) – is promising. Indeed, Gendreau, Little and Goggin (1996) in their meta-analysis of predictors of adult recidivism, reported that dynamic factors were strong indicators of likelihood to re-offend. Douglas (2000) indicated that little insight, antisocial attitudes, acute mental illness, impulsivity, low responsiveness to institutional treatment, as well as unrealistic reintegration plans, exposure to destabilizers, lack of personal support, low compliance with supervision, and high stress were associated with heightened risk for recidivism on community release. Static factors such as criminal history, history of antisocial behavior, early family life, and social adjustment were also powerful predictors of recidivism (Gendreau, Little and Goggin (1996).

Lipsey's (1992) meta-analysis of treatment effects among young offenders reported a broad range, as well as an overall positive and modest impact. Results from deterrence treatments indicated negative results. Lipsey and Wilson (1998) identified treatment types that carried the greatest impact: interpersonal skills and teaching in the family home. Residential services in the community and behavioral programs also produced the best effects, whereas group counseling, drug abstinence, and milieu therapy produced little effect. Intensive supervision and community-based programs were found

to make worthwhile reductions in delinquent behavior (Lipsey 1999).

Among adult parolees, deterrence interventions, such as intensive supervision, appeared to produce positive effects on recidivism when they were paired with some form of treatment (Gendreau 1999). McGuire (2002) described a series of key principles of effective interventions. They were developed from several meta-analytic reviews of "what works" for juvenile and adult offenders in institutional and community settings. There are gaps in the literature on the differential impact of generic or specialized programming for offender subtypes, as well as institutional versus community delivery. Additionally, differential impacts of intervention by age, gender, ethnicity, or other cultural differences are not yet well understood (McGuire 2002).

Characteristics of interventions most likely to succeed had a strong theoretical foundation, were developed to address a particular level of static risk and criminogenic needs, utilized active approaches to learning, standardized delivery and cognitive-behavioral models, and were offered by well-trained staff (McGuire 2001).

Although family relations has been the subject of empirical inquiry (Gordon 2002), little attention has been paid to other contextual factors associated with criminal recidivism, such as community social support – individuals, family members outside of the immediate family, or community institutional support - education, social services, and health services. While there is evidence that corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs have an impact on recidivism (Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie 2000), there has been little attention paid to the economic climate and work conditions in which ex-offenders may find local employment. It is not uncommon for parole officers to hear about the challenges offenders find to securing decent jobs with a criminal record and modest work experience.

The present study capitalizes on the expertise of front line service providers in an attempt to determine if their perceptions of the needs of newly released federal offenders are consistent with factors known to affect success on parole. Their purpose is to promote successful reintegration for offenders leaving the institutional system to the community. Central to effective community parole work is the recognition of static risk factors and management of dynamic risk factors known to associate with recidivism on a case-by-case basis. Indeed, effective correctional intervention requires the use of styles and modes of treatment that are matched with the client's need and learning style (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen 1990).

Not surprisingly, the first 3 months after release are a challenging time for offenders and their parole officers. Violations of parole conditions occur frequently during this period, and no study has examined their perceptions of needs for newly released offenders. There is a considerable amount of literature on the accuracy of professional judgment. While practitioner judgments about human health and behavior in many cases rival the precision of statistical, actuarial, or algorithmic methods, mechanical approaches to judgment are more accurate, on average (Grove, Zald, Lebow, Snitz, and Nelson 2000). Parole officers have knowledge about the issues that face offenders who have recently begun to live outside of a correctional institution and make daily case management decisions concerning their safe reintegration into the community. However, it is not known if parole officers use similar factors in arriving at a judgment about offender need as those that have been reported in the literature.

Parole officers supervising male and female, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders from a broad geographic area were asked to respond to the question "What do parolees need to succeed in the first 90 days of release?" Their responses to this question were statistically analyzed into concepts using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. The results are compared to the existing psychological, criminological, and human services literatures on recidivism, risk management, reintegration needs, and rehabilitation of offenders on parole or probation.

CONCEPT MAPPING

Initially developed for planning and management applications, concept maps have been used for evaluation, survey design, curriculum development, or theory building (Trochim 1989a). In particular, concept maps are useful to describe constructs for the purposes of research, where statements within the clusters provide direction for the operationalization of a concept.

Concept mapping has been applied within the fields of psychology and human services. Clients' perceptions of helpful experiences in counseling (Paulson, Truscott and Stuart 1999), the experience of depression (Daughtry and Kunkel 1993), attitudes of chronic low back pain sufferers (Knish and Calder 1999), and experiences of abused women with the justice system (Ludwig 1996) have been described through the concept mapping method.

According to Trochim (1989b), there are six major components to the concept mapping process. The first step was the generation of responses to a particular question asked of a specified group of respondents. Second, these responses were edited for clarity and to eliminate redundancies. Third, the statements were sorted into piles of like statements. The piles were considered to represent general themes. Fourth, two types of statistical analysis were applied to the sorting of the statements to describe the relationship between

statements and their groupings. A decision was made regarding the optimal number of concepts. Fifth, the major concepts were identified according to the contents of the cluster. Sixth, the map was used for its intended purpose: a graphic representation of the conceptualization process.

METHOD

To prepare for the concept mapping process two steps were taken: participants were selected and the focus for conceptualization was determined (Trochim 1989b). The following sections outline the participants and research instruments employed in the study.

Participants

Participants were obtained through the staff and contract community parole officer list in a large western Canadian district. Parole officers provide supervision for inmates released to the community to serve the remainder of their sentences. Inmates are typically released from lower security institutions after cascading down from higher security institutions. Canadian federal inmates serve sentences of two years or more for violent and non-violent offenses.

The area from which participants were drawn includes approximately half of the geographic area of one province and a territory. Participants were selected at random from the staff list, and 111 were contacted by telephone. Messages were left for parole officers who were unavailable at the time they were called; each was invited to call the researcher back at a time that was more convenient.

Data collection continued until no unique responses were being received; 74 participants were interviewed, 42 were female, and 32 male. Both male and female parole officers of male and female offenders participated. Participants resided in varying regions of the province and territory including urban, rural, wilderness, and reserve areas. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parole officers of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders participated. The age of participants varied from 25 to 61, the number of years employed in corrections from less than one year (3 months) to 31 years, and the number of years providing community parole supervision from less than one year (4 months) to 25 years.

Participants verbally consented to telephone interviews that included the open-ended question: "What do parolees need to succeed in the first 90 days after release?"

Representation of Statements

The conceptual domain was analyzed by two distinct statistical procedures and was followed by a decision about the optimal number of concepts for the final solution. Multidimensional scaling placed the

statements spatially on a map, and cluster analysis placed the points into clusters representing higher order aggregates of the statements. The first analysis reveals underlying structure among individual items, and the second, among groups of the individual items. The study utilized the Concept System (Trochim 1987) to perform the statistical analysis and construction of the concept maps.

According to MacCallum (1988) the purpose of multidimensional scaling is to "represent and provide a basis for understanding the structure inherent in certain types of data involving judgments about stimuli" (p. 421). Nonmetric multidimensional scaling is a multivariate analysis that takes a table of similarities and represents it as distances between each of the original items.

Each statement was placed on a map called a point map (Trochim 1989b). Statements that were closer together on the map were more likely to be sorted into the same piles more frequently. Statements that were far apart were more likely to be sorted into different piles more frequently. The bridging index is a value between zero and one that indicated the relationships between a statement and others on the map. In general, the closer the value was to one for a particular statement, the more often that statement was sorted with statements in other regions of the map. As the value approached zero, the more likely the statement was sorted with others situated in its area. A second analysis was performed on the map data to represent the conceptual domain (Trochim 1989b). Hierarchical cluster analysis (Anderberg 1973; Everitt 1980) of the multidimensional scaling X-Y coordinate values was used to group the statements on the map into clusters that represent similar concepts. Initially, each statement is considered to be its own cluster. At each stage of the analysis the algorithm combined two clusters until all statements end up in one cluster. The decision regarding the most appropriate number of concepts was made by the researcher based on the conceptual fit of the statements within the various cluster solutions generated and the items contributing most to the uniqueness of each cluster using the average and individual bridging indices. Cluster solutions from 15 to 3 were examined before concluding that the seven cluster solution fit the data best.

Generation of Statements

Participants generated responses to the question or focus of discussion. These statements represented the domain of interest (Trochim 1989b). Statements were edited for clarity, essential meaning, and redundancy (Trochim 1989b) in the study using an inter-rater agreement process.

Figure 1.   Concept Map
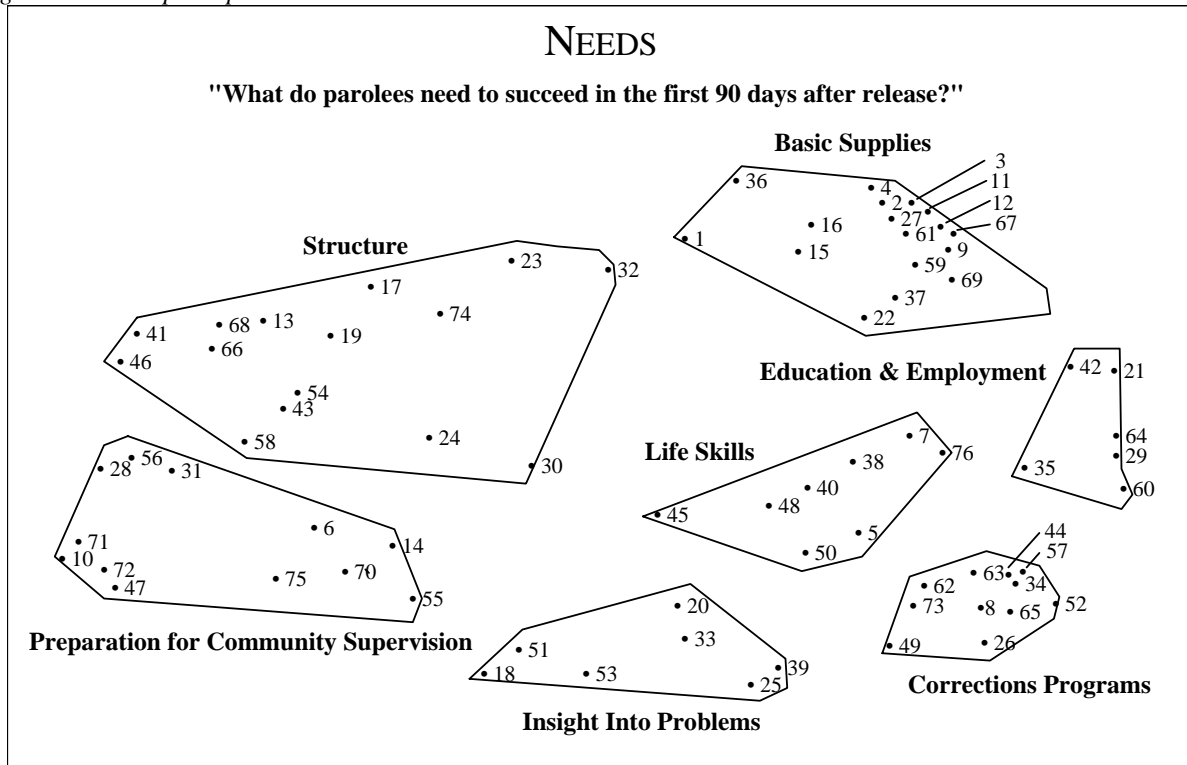
Only unique responses from participants were recorded by gender[1]. The total number of statements provided was 146. Males provided 72 unique statements and females, 70. There was 87% agreement on the unique statements provided by males and females. The resulting list of statements included 6 statements made by males and not females, and 4 statements made by females and not males. Statements made by males included: "positive role model", "faith community", "work-appropriate clothing and supplies", "structure", and "establishing daily routine". Statements provided by females included: "understanding and flexible parole officer", "child care", "programs for female offenders", and "learning socially acceptable communication". Because there were few differences between responses by males and females, for the purposes of analysis, their statements were combined. Editing for clarity (e.g. "payment for taking corrections treatment", changed to "program participation allowance") essential meaning (e.g. help understanding other languages for parolees whose first language is not English", reduced to "interpretive services"), as well as removal of redundant responses (where two statements essentially report the same meaning) by the author and a forensic psychologist reduced the number of statements to 76.

Structuring of Statements

There was interest by participants in the study results, and several, when asked at the time they were interviewed, were interested in doing a sort. Their participation in the sorting task also had the benefit of representing the perspectives of parole officers in the analysis. Those who participated in the interviews were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the sorting task. Consenting participants were instructed to follow a specific procedure for the statements: read through the statements; sort the statements into piles in a way that makes sense to you (place similar statements together into the same pile).A total of 20 individuals consented to participate in the sort process, and 18 sorts were returned.

Interpretation and Utilization of Maps

Following the statistical analysis, the clusters were visually inspected and labeled by the author and a forensic psychologist to represent the constituent statements of which they were comprised. The resulting map provided a visual summary of the conceptualization process.

RESULTS

Statements in Table 1 were collected from participants, edited, and then returned to them for sorting. The sort data were analyzed using the Concept System (Trochim, 1987). The author examined maps with different numbers of concepts before arriving at a decision in favor of the seven-cluster solution. By

reducing the number of clusters by two, additional solutions were examined. Insignificant changes were introduced from reducing the number from 13 to 11, and 11 to 9. However, reducing the nine-cluster solution to eight represented a substantial improvement. Both the six and five concept solutions appeared to be over-generalized and less useful. The seven-concept solution appeared to provide the best interpretability (see Figure 1).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study are compared to the available literature on reintegration needs of offenders. Similarities and differences are noted.

Cluster One: Basic Supplies

Although basic needs of food and clothing for offenders released from prison are reported in the literature (Helfgott 1997), the more specific health

Table 1. Cluster Items and Bridging Values for Concept Map

Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index	Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Cluster 1: Basic Supplies	**0.21**	**Cluster 4: Corrections Programs**	**0.20**
67. Transportation	0.00	44. Long term programs	0.07
2. Health care number	0.03	8. Relapse prevention programs	0.09
61. Bus pass	0.03	34. More intensive programs	0.12
12. Social insurance number	0.05	57. Booster programs	0.12
11. Dental care	0.05	63. Drop-in workshops	0.12
27. Eye glasses	0.05	26. Programs for female offenders	0.13
4. Bank account	0.06	65. Continuous intake programs	0.21
16. Driver's license	0.11	52. Programs flexible w/ employment	0.23
9. Work clothes & supplies	0.24	62. Service delivery in other languages	0.34
59. Medication	0.24	73. Incentive to participate in programs	0.35
15. Social assistance	0.29	49. Programs facilitated by Aboriginals	0.39
69. Supplementary medical coverage	0.31		
36. Food	0.32	**Cluster 5: Insight Into Problems**	**0.76**
3. Decent wages	0.35	20. Conflict resolution skills	0.63
22. Child care	0.44	33. Application of program knowledge	0.64
37. Employers who hire Aboriginals	0.46	39. Psychological assessments	0.68
1. Release grant	0.59	25. Healing lodges	0.77
		51. Understand risk factors & relapse prevention	0.78
Cluster 2: Life Skills	**0.51**	53. Knowledge of their crime cycle	0.82
50. Address domestic violence issues	0.39	18. Proper intake assessment	1.00
5. List of AA/CA meetings	0.41		
48. Basic life skills education	0.51	**Cluster 6: Preparation for Community Supervision**	**0.62**
40. Learn socially acceptable communication skills	0.53	71. Understanding, flexible parole officer	0.35
38. Community functioning skills	0.53	56. Positive feedback	0.42
7. Counselor teaching money management	0.54	10. Cooperative case management team	0.45
76. Mental health services	0.54	6. Supports are aware of parolee's crime cycle	0.47
45. Halfway house for Aboriginal parolees	0.67	14. Someone to talk to about stress	0.52
		72. Liaison btw institution & community	0.53
Cluster 3: Education & Employment	**0.58**	70. Faith community	0.58
21. Job placement services for parolees	0.52	28. Realistic community plan	0.74
60. Upgrading for education or trades	0.53	47. Understanding parole rules before released	0.75
42. Funding for upgrading	0.60	55. Immigration liaison	0.84
64. Employment resource counselor	0.60	31. Smoother transition to community for provincial offenders	0.85
29. Program participation allowance	0.61	75. Motivation to change	0.90
35. Interpretive services	0.63		

Table 1. Continued

Cluster and Statement		Bridging Index
Cluster 7: Structure		**0.63**
58.	Positive role model	0.42
43.	Significant other	0.45
54.	Community support	
32.	Stable residence	0.56
68.	Structure	0.58
30.	Support for lower functioning parolees	0.59
46.	Clear goals	0.60
13.	Stability	0.61
74.	Appropriate leisure/ social activities	0.62
19.	Adjusting to freedom	0.65
17.	Establishing daily routine	0.66
23.	Proper personal grooming	0.69
24.	Close monitoring	0.73
41.	Hope	0.86
66.	Opportunity to make choices	0.90

needs mentioned by study participants, such as health care coverage for dental, eye, and medication were not. These basic needs can be considered important in order to meet other needs contained in this cluster. There are several references in the literature on the housing needs of offenders in the community (Austin 2001; Petersilia 2001), which were also identified by the participants in the study.

Income needs were described by study participants, including a social insurance number, necessary for employment in Canada, and a bank account. These were not reported specifically in the literature, but the idea of a release grant (Petersilia 2001) and knowledge of social services were mentioned (Wormith and McKeague 1996). Work clothing was identified as a basic need for employment by participants but not in the literature. The issue of "decent wages" was also mentioned by parole officers and may be related to the need for "employers who hire Aboriginals". Prejudice and discrimination are barriers to getting income and employment needs met (Helfgott 1997).

Childcare is a need, more often for female offenders than male (Harm and Phillips 2001). There is considerable attention paid to this issue in the literature in relation to day care (Flanagan 1995), care during community treatment (Hall, Baldwin, Prendegrast 2001), and parenting education (Castellano 1995).

Cluster Two: Life Skills

Several references are made in the literature to the need for life skill training for offenders including concepts of problem solving, negotiation, critical reasoning, money management, and independent living skills (McGuire and Hatcher 2001; Raynor and

Vandstone 1996; Roberts and Harper 1997). Mental health and substance abuse needs have also been identified in the literature (Helfgott 1997; Read 1995), as have family violence interventions (Castellano 1995). While there are several references to shelter issues (Helfgott 1997) and halfway housing needs (Austin, 2001), there are none described as culturally sensitive in the literature. Lipsey (1992) found a general reduction in offender recidivism in a meta analysis of a variety of young offender life skills programs, indicating that these interventions do have a positive impact on offender reintegration.

Cluster Three: Education and Employment

There are references in the literature to the needs of offenders being released into the community for educational upgrading and job placement as well as vocational counseling services (McMurray 1993), with a distinct cultural perspective and different languages of instruction (Roberts and Harper 1997). The funding and income needed to support these activities have not been described in the literature, however. Funding issues may be addressed through corrections programs' connections with other community resources such as schools, employers, social service agencies, and neighborhood organizations (Currie 1985, in Bloom 1991). Income from attending upgrading and work-experience programs has not received much attention in the literature (Petersilia 2001), but may be an important element in making these opportunities attractive and useful short-term solutions to offenders with no savings who are released to the community.

In a review of effective rehabilitation interventions for juveniles, Lipsey (1999) reported the benefits of community-based school-sponsored and academic skill-oriented programs. In their meta-analysis of education, vocation and work programs for adult offenders, Wilson, Gallagher and MacKenzie (2000) found that participants recidivated at a lower rate than non-participants.

Cluster Four: Corrections Programs

Different authors (Palmer 1996) describe a number of correctional programs that focus on problem-solving, social skills, emotional management, negotiation skills, critical reasoning, and pro social thinking (Raynor and Vanstone 1996). Offender variables have also been studied. The type and duration of these programs vary according to the protocol used, the offender populations designed for (e.g. those who have versus have not completed prior treatment), and the delivery method (e.g. program staff, psychology, case managers). Success has been reported in delivering programs specific to particular offender groups (Flanagan 1995).

Meta analytic techniques have been used to demonstrate the positive impact of correctional programs on offender rehabilitation. There is support in the literature for the effectiveness of programs that match intensity with risk, target criminogenic needs, match teaching style to offender learning style, are delivered in the community, have an emphasis on skill-building, and have consistency between goals and methods (Andrews, Zinger, Hoge, Bonta, Gendreau, and Cullen 1990; Losel 1995; McGuire 1995; 2001).

Cluster Five: Insight Into Problems

There are references in the literature to the importance of a crime cycle, which involves identification of the risk areas and typical cognitive and behavioral pathways toward relapse for offenders on release (Castellano 1995). Psychotherapy evaluation research with even the most challenging cases under the most challenging circumstances, those with antisocial personalities under prison conditions, has shown positive effects on re-offense after release (Losel and Koferl 1989). In community settings the impact of interventions to increase insight into problem areas of offenders does vary according to their offense history and qualifications of program delivery staff (Lipsey and Wilson 1998). Its identification as a need for newly released offenders suggests that it should be developed and drafted during incarceration, reviewed and revised as soon as possible after release, as well as on an ongoing basis.

Cluster Six: Preparation for Community Supervision

While there are several references in the literature to facilitating reentry into the community for offenders who have recently been released from incarceration, there is little attention paid to coordinating the case planning and management with the community officer's input before the offender is released. Bloom (1991) reports on the development of solid ties between the offender and the community as a goal of community supervision, and Currie (1985) describes connecting corrections programs with other community resources such as schools, employers, social service agencies, and neighborhood organizations. While it is seen as important to have a close working relationship between the community clinical team and community parole officer (Roskes and Feldman 1999), only for mentally ill offenders is it identified that a liaison between treatment, case management, and rehabilitation services between the institution and community is important (Roskes and Feldman 1999).

There are several references to the characteristics of effective community supervision and the relationship between the parole officer and the offender (Ford, Pritchard, and Cox 1997). It is suggested that the relationship does have potential for beneficial outcomes for supervision, if offender was willing and had needs that matched with officer time, helper orientation to case management, and skills (Leibrich 1994).

Cluster Seven: Structure

In the literature there is a focus on supervision strategies by frequency and invasiveness according to their differing outcomes for various groups of parolees (Gendreau and Cullen 1994; Palmer 1996). While it is obvious that instability is not necessarily the cause of all problems on parole, there is merit to considering factors that indicate stability through structured interventions for newly released offenders. The literature quite clearly supports the use of structured cognitive-behavioral interventions (Redondo, Sanchez-Meca and Garrido 1999), as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress after release into the community (Losel 2001). A return to old patterns of behavior can result for some offenders who have flexibility, opportunity, and perceive a lack of other options in response to unmet needs. In some cases increased structure, like intensive supervision, may be useful (Ford, Prithcard and Cox 1997).

CONCLUSION

Understanding the needs of newly released offenders is crucial at a time when more Canadian offenders are in custody than in the community. The approximate 60/40 split between institution and community residency among Federal offenders in Canada has remained relatively consistent (Motiuk, Boe, and Nafekh 2003). The topic is also timely given the new provisions of the Canadian Youth Criminal Justice Act, which encourages community-based sentences and periods of community supervision following incarceration. Because about 90% of federal offenders have a previous youth or adult conviction (Motiuk, Boe and Nafkeh 2003), successful interventions at both juvenile and adult levels have the potential to decrease future admissions.

The literature on community corrections suggests that offenders do respond acceptably to intervention in general, and that focused, cognitive-behavioral interventions appear to be most effective. However, there has been only modest attention paid to meeting basic needs and understanding the role of contextual factors in recidivism. Both make a significant contribution to the life pathways of many who come into contact with the justice system.

Participants in this study described the needs that offenders have in order to meet the demands of their context upon release. The accurate appraisal of offenders' own abilities and risk is important, but not sufficient. Basic training in money management, and life skills do not meet the basic practical needs like

health care, medications, eyeglasses, and a social insurance card, which are necessary in order to find employment. A stable and pro-social living environment also plays a role in the success of newly released offenders. Transitional housing is crucial for offenders to get settled and independent. The type of housing and quality of support provided plays a role in parole success. It is possible that if the conditions they find themselves in after release are no different than those they were in at the time of offense, immersion in the context which played a role in their index offence will encourage a return to previous behavior.

In general, the factors affecting success on parole identified by parole officers are the same as those reported in the literature. Basic needs for income, education, employment, community support, as well as realistic expectations of community release and internalized relapse-prevention strategies are fundamental to success for newly released offenders. However, limited opportunities to use their new insights and practice newly learned skills pose a substantial challenge for many upon release. Concrete assistance (e.g. bus tickets – where available, and child care) may be barriers to meeting expectations others have of them. The complexity of managing new and multiple responsibilities (self, family, friends, employer, parole officer) should not be overlooked.

Offenders benefit from having something productive to do with enough financial and interpersonal support to do it. That is not to say that meeting basic needs is sufficient for successful reintegration. However, when combined with realistic pro-social expectations and a solid plan for handling difficult situations, it appears that early success on community supervision is more likely. This finding is consistent with the results of a study of Canadian recidivists (Zamble and Quinsey 1997), examining the impact of environment and coping as factors leading to re-offense in the first year after release.

The literature describes promising initiatives for mentally ill offenders where relationships between service providers, family members, community associations, and the case management teams in the institution and community are developed. Short-term outcomes for these offenders appear to be better when they have their basic needs met and parole expectations clarified at the time of release. It appears that the parole officers who participated in the present study also see the benefits of recognizing multiple areas of need for newly released offenders. Perhaps new reintegration initiatives for parolees early in their community release can be developed and evaluated to address this apparent gap in the literature.

While there is agreement between the needs identified by the parole officers and those reported in the literature, the reason for this is not known. Do parole officers make assessments of offender needs based on their own professional experience or formal training? Because training in risk assessment is mandatory for parole officers, it is likely that they have been influenced by the literature that is included in staff training. However, years of work experience among some (up to 25 years of service as a community parole officer) may also account for knowledge about offender needs.

There are other limitations. No frequency data were collected, so there is no evidence as to whether parole officers agreed with one another on the needs, or whether some needs were more important than others. Future research may explore the agreement and importance pieces to determine the extent to which they align with the available literature.

Additionally, this study only presents the perspective of community parole officers. While they are major players in community corrections, they are not the only ones who have a perspective on this issue. The perspectives of offenders, program staff, and medical staff should be obtained. On the issue of liaison between institution and community treatment and supervision, it would be helpful to know what institutional parole officers see as important issues for those offenders they are preparing for community release in order to start a dialogue about how to address these issues.

A final limitation concerns the generalizability of findings. Because the perceptions of parole officers are not based on interactions with offenders of a similar profile, the needs as identified are not sensitive to differences among offenders with different circumstances upon entry into prison, nor the prison environment from which they emerged. Therefore, the results speak to general needs, which should be considered for offenders released into the community, and not specific risk factors for all offenders.

In conclusion, it appears that many issues can affect the success of newly released offenders under community supervision, and parole officers collectively recognize the same factors as those described in the literature. It is possible to consider the preventive effects of each by isolating and combining predictors from this list that may prove to have a more indirect effect to recidivism, adding more complexity to the study of why offenders return to jail, but a more complete picture of the causes and their relationship to one another.

The results indicate that parole officers, in general, report the same needs for offenders on community release as are found in the literature. While the source of their information – experience or training – cannot be ascertained from these data, it seems that they have, as a group, a solid knowledge about the issues which have an empirical basis in the literature. As a group, they are

knowledgeable. Team efforts may serve to strengthen the decision-making accuracy of parole officers. Opportunities to interact and review cases with colleagues may provide the opportunity to learn from one another's experience or education, and should be examined for their impact value on knowledge and accuracy.

NOTES

[1] Only unique responses to the question were collected. Redundant responses were not recorded by the interviewer at the time of interview, and were therefore available to be incorporated into the analysis.

REFERENCES

Anderberg, Michael. R. 1973. *Cluster analysis for applications.* New York, NY: Academic Press.

Andrews, D.A., Ivan Zinger, Robert D. Hoge, James Bonta, Paul Gendreau, and Francis T. Cullen. 1990. "Does correctional treatment work? A clinically relevant and psychologically informed meta-analysis." *Criminology* 28:369-404.

Andrews, D.A. and James Bonta. 2003. *The psychology of criminal conduct.* Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing.

Austin, James. 2001. "Prisoner reentry: Current trends, practices, and issues." *Crime & Delinquency* 47:314-334.

Bloom, Barbara. E. 1991. "Community-managed corrections: An empowering approach to community-corrections relationships." *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 17:263-277.

Castellano, Thomas. C. 1995. "Correctional options: Aftercare." *Corrections Today* 57:5-16.

Currie, Elliott. 1985. *Confronting crime.* New York, NY: Panthenon.

Daughtry, Donald. W, and Mark. A. Kunkel. 1993. "Experience of depression in college students: A concept map." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 40:316-323.

Douglas, Kevin S. 2000. HCR-20 Violence and risk assessment scheme: Overview and annotated bibliography. Burnaby, BC: Mental Health and Law Policy Institute.

Everitt, Brian. 1980. *Cluster analysis* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Halsted Press.

Flanagan, La Mont. W. 1995. "Meeting the special needs of females in custody: Maryland's unique approach." *Federal Probation* 59:49-53.

Ford, Peter., Colin Pritchard, and Malcom Cox. 1997. "Consumer opinions of the probation service: Advise, assistance, befriending and the reduction of crime." *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice* 36:42-61.

Gendreau, Paul. and Francis T. Cullen. 1994. "Intensive rehabilitative supervision: The next generation in community corrections?" *Federal Probation* 58:72-85.

Gendreau, Paul, Tracy Little, and Claire Goggin. 1996. "A meta-analysis of the predictors of adult offender recidivism: What works!" *Criminology* 34:575-607.

Gendreau, Paul. 1999. "Rational policies for reforming offenders" *The ICCA Journal of Community Corrections* 9:16-20.

Gordon, Donald A. 2002. "Intervening with families of troubled youth: Functional family therapy and parenting wisely." pp 193-220 in *Offender Rehabilitation and Treatment*, edited by J. McGuire. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Grove, William M., David H. Zald, Boyd S. Lebow, Beth E. Snitz, and Chad Nelson. 2000. "Clinical versus mechanical prediction: A meta-analysis." *Psychological Assessment* 12:19-30.

Harm, Nancy. J. and Susan D. Phillips. 2001. "You can't go home again: Women and criminal recidivism." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 32:3-21.

Helfgott, Jacqueline. 1997. "Ex-offender needs versus community opportunity in Seattle, Washington." *Federal Probation* 61:12-25.

Horn, M. F. 2000. "*Rethinking sentencing.*" Paper prepared for the National Institute of Justice Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections.

Knish, Steve. and Peter Calder. 1999. "Beliefs of low back pain sufferers: A concept map." *Canadian Journal of Rehabilitation* 12:165-177.

Leibrich, Julie. 1994. "What do offenders say about going straight?" *Federal Probation* 58:41-46.

Lipsey, Mark W. 1992. "Juvenile delinquency treatment: A meta-analytic inquiry into the variability of effects." pp. 83-127 in *Meta-analysis for explanation*, edited by T. D. Cook, H. Cooper, D. S. Cordray, H.

Hartmann, L. V. Hedges, R. J. Light, T. A. Louis, and F. Mosteller. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

—. 1995. "What do we learn from 400 research studies on the effectiveness of treatment with juvenile delinquents?" pp. 63-78 in *What works: Reducing reoffending*, *The Wiley Series in Offender Rehabilitation*, edited by J. McGuire. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Lipsey, Mark W. and David B. Wilson. 1998. "Effective intervention for serious juvenile offenders: A synthesis of research." pp. 313-345 in *Serious and violent juvenile offenders: Risk factors and successful interventions*, edited by R. Loeber and D. P. Farrington. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Lipsey, Mark W. 1999. "Can rehabilitative programs reduce the recidivism of juvenile offenders? An inquiry into the effectiveness of practical programs." *Virginia Journal of Social Policy & the Law* 6:611-641.

Losel, Friedrich and Peter Koferl. 1989. "Evaluation research on correctional treatment in West Germany: A meta-analysis." pp. 334-355 in *Criminal behavior and the justice system: Psycholological perspectives*, edited by H. Wegener, F. Losel, and J. Haisch. Ann Arbour, MI: Springer-Verlag.

Losel, Friedrich. 1995. "The efficacy of correctional treatment: A review and synthesis of meta-evaluations." pp. 79-111 in *What works: Reducing reoffending*, *The Wiley Series in Offender Rehabilitation*, edited by J. McGuire. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Ludwig, Sue. R. (1996). "*Abused women's experience with the justice system: Concept mapping.*" Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

MacCallum, R. 1988. "Multidimensional scaling." In John. R. Nesselroade and Raymond. B. Cattell (Eds.), *Handbook of multivariate experimental psychology* (pp. 421-445). New York, NY: Plenum.

McGuire, James. 1995. "What works: Reducing reoffending." in *Wiley Series in Offender Rehabilitation*, edited by C. R. Hollin and M. McMurran. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

McGuire, James. and Ruth Hatcher. 2001. "Offense-focused problem-solving: Preliminary evaluation of a cognitive skills program." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 28:564-587.

McGuire, James. 2002. "Offender rehabilitation and treatment: Effective programs and policies to reduce re-

offending." in *Wiley Series in Forensic Clinical Psychology*, edited by C. R. Hollin and M. McMurran. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

McMurray, Harvey. L. 1993. "High risk parolees in transition from institution to community life." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 19:145-161.

Motiuk, Larry., Roger Boe, and Mark Nafekh. (2003). *The safe return of offenders to the community: A statistical overview.* Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada.

Palmer, Ted. 1996. "Programmatic and nonprogrammatic aspects of successful intervention." In A. T. Harland (Ed.), *Choosing correctional options that work: Defining the demand and evaluating the supply* (pp. 131-182). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Paulson, Barbara., Derek Truscott, and Janice Stuart.. (1999). Clients' perceptions of helpful experiences in counseling. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46,* 317-324.

Petersilia, Joan. 2001. "When prisoners return to communities: Political, economic, and social consequences." *Federal Probation* 65:3-9.

Raynor, Peter. and Maurice Vanstone. . 1996. "Reasoning and rehabilitation in Britain: The results of the straight thinking on probation (STOP) programme." *Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 40:272-284.

Read, Edward. M. 1995. "Posttreatment supervision challenges: Introducing Al-Anon, Nar-Anon, and Oxford House, Inc." *Federal Probation* 59:18-27.

Redondo, Santiago, Julio Sanchez-Meca, and Vicente Garrido. 1999. "The influence of treatment programmes on the recidivism of juvenile and adult offenders: An European meta-analytic review." *Psychology, Crime & Law* 5:251-278.

—. 2002. "Crime treatment in Europe: A review of outcome studies." Pp. 112-141 in *Offender rehabilitation and treatment: Effective programmes and policies to reduce re-offending*, edited by J. McGuire. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Roberts, Richard. L. and Ruth Harper. 1997. "The effects of Fresh Start program on Native American parolee's job placement.*" Journal of Employment Counseling* 34:115-123.

Roskes, Erik. and Richard Feldman.. 1999. A collaborative community-based treatment program for

offenders with mental illness. *Psychiatric Services* 50:1614-1619.

Travis, J. and Joan Petersilia.. 2001. "Reentry reconsidered: A new look at an old question." *Crime & Delinquency* 47:291-313.

Trochim, William. M. 1987. *The Concept System.* Ithasca, NY: Trochim Publishing.

Trochim, William. M. 1989a. "Concept mapping: Soft science or hard art?" *Evaluation and Program Planning* 12:87-110.
Trochim, William. M. 1989b. "An introduction to concept mapping for planning and evaluation." *Evaluation and Program Planning* 12:1-16.

Ward, Joe. H. 1963. "Hierarchical grouping to optimize an objective function." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 58:236-244.

Wilson, David B., Catherine A. Gallagher, and Doris L. MacKenzie. 2000. "A meta-analysis of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs for adult offenders." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 37:347-368.

Wormith, J. Steven. and Francis McKeague. 1996. "A mental health survey of community correctional clients in Canada." *Criminal Behavior and Mental Health* 6:49-72.

Zamble, Edward and Vernon L. Quinsey. 1997. *The Criminal Recidivism Process*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Brown is a licensed clinical psychologist, registered social worker, and assistant professor in the Department of Family Social Sciences at the University of Manitoba where he teaches courses on youth and community issues. He is interested in participatory approaches to research and has been involved in projects in the field of foster care. He would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their helpful comments. He would also like to thank R. Stege, S. Choldin, V. Roper, and B. Green for their valuable contributions to this study.

Contact Information: Department of Family Studies, 105A Human Ecology Building, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada, R3T 2N2, 204.474.7386 (voice). Email: jason_brown@umanitoba.ca.