

Differences in the Rehabilitation Experience: A Case Study Among White-Collar Offenders

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INTRODUCTION

- This is a case study to determine differences in how repeat formerly incarcerated white-collar offenders experience rehabilitation post conviction.
- The study relies on Ward and Marshall’s (2007, p. 290) conceptualization of rehabilitation, which includes “... an evaluative and capacity building process that aims to enable offenders to engage in effective social practices and meaningful personal projects.”
- This study will address three specific research questions:

Research Questions

- What does the rehabilitation process look like for repeat formerly white-collar offenders?
- How does formal intervention, personal reflection, and family involvement impact the rehabilitation experience?
- How do these three areas interact with each other?

METHOD

Participants

- Case study conducted on 2 individuals using in-depth qualitative data (N = 2)
 - Both Male and African American
 - Participant 1: Alfred*, incarcerated 3 times
 - 43 years old
 - Some college
 - Latest offense charge: conspiracy to defraud the government
 - Participant 2: Kevin*, incarcerated 11 times
 - 63 years old
 - Some college
 - Latest offense charge: embezzlement
- * Denotes all names and identifiers have been changed

Measures and Procedures

- Data are drawn from a larger study examining adults and their experience with the criminal justice system. The current case study relies on in-depth qualitative interviews with two participants.
- Interviews were transcribed and then coded for three main areas; within each, there are two sub-areas into which data were coded (see results):
 - Personal Reflection*: “...receive exposure to primary values, adaptive beliefs, constructive self- and other-regarding attitudes, and social recognition” (Ward & Marshall 2007, p. 280) and “...is a reflective understanding of an individual’s life that captures what is of importance to him or her and how these commitments evolve over” (Ward & Marshall 2007, p. 280)
 - Family Involvement*: “People turn to family for support when experiencing a particularly trying time in life. It stands to reason that incarceration and release are similarly traumatic events during which family can play a supportive role” (Naser & Vigne 2006, p. 94)
 - Formal Intervention*: “A good rehabilitation model should also specify the most suitable style of treatment (e.g., skills based, structured) and the crucial treatment targets (e.g., interpersonal skills training, emotional regulation), inform therapists about the appropriate attitudes to take toward offenders, address the issue of motivation, and clarify the role and importance of the therapeutic alliance.” (Ward & Marshall 2007, p. 282)

RESULTS

Table 1. Demonstrative Quotes From Participants

Theme	Coded Measures	Alfred	Kevin
Personal Reflection	1. Adaptive Beliefs 2. Primary Values	"On this last prison sentence, what I did was I looked up and it said the Department of Corrections. So, I said hold on let me decipher this. The department of corrections...so that means I'm supposed to be in here correcting the way I think, and it was in that moment that my whole mentality and ideology switched up"	"I still had a home; I still have responsibilities there uh. I talked to my daughters a lot. I got a lot of encouragement from people. Uh because for the first 90 days it was really, really hard on me because I was sick and uh a lot of times, I thank God. I ended up going to Youngstown Mercy hospital with chest pains and they did a stress test and from that day forward I got up and said 'man you gotta do better than that..'"
Family Involvement	1.Supportiveness of Family 2.Family Member	"I can decipher who is who and who I really need in my life and you know in that setting you find out okay of course moms. Mom always gonna be there. You know my sisters, they were there. My brother. Uh I probably had 20 guys I called my friends, maybe 2 people wrote me...maybe 3. And I don't you didn't have to send me any money cause while I was incarcerated, I still had 250,000 put up. So, I didn't have to worry about money. So, I was just trying to see who was gonna do this out of a earnest and genuine heart and it was just really those 3 people."	"I got one visit while I was there and the reason why I didn't get a lot of visits was it's a 5 hour drive from ...1 to ...2 for them to see me for 15 minutes. So, I told them don't come." "...I was on the phone every day except when we were locked down."
Formal Intervention	1.Treatment 2.Therapeutic Alliance	"The programs in prison they intensify. They take you to another level as far as how you think because I took a RDAP program and we had um it was four ladies who were Psychologists and they were I...I like to use this word a lot they were vicious. I mean they not letting get nothing pass. Once they introduce you to rational thinking and you know how to do RSA's. You put the activating events here, the camera checks here and reeducation they giving you, tools. So, um I'll give you an example um 'oh...oh I couldn't make it this morning because I went to sleep late.' she will stop you what are you doing, you're making excuses. So now we have to start taking on accountability. You know these things, responsibility. All of these things start kicking in to now holding ourselves accountable for our actions and now we have a new system to go off of and responsibility is... like at the top of the list because all of you, you have to be responsible to say 'hey I'm going to get up. I'm not going to the game tonight; I'm not going to go to the big party. I got to study. So that I can get to the next level which is hopefully a master's degree, then a PhD' and you know wherever you want to go."	"Back then it was...it was structured. It was uh in the Midwest ¹ they had reformatory's for people under thirty who was doing their first crime. It was more structured. They had schools. They had...they were trying to rehabilitate you then. Actually, it was called the ... ² Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections. Um now in the Midwest ³ it's called uh...what is it called? Uh oh...It's not...I don't...I think they still have the uh rehabilitation stuff but it's really no rehabilitation in the state of ... ⁴ as far as state prisons. Now to go up to where I was recently at in the feds. It was one of the most ugliest situations I ever seen. Inmates were ODing, 3 or 4 a day."

* ...1 through ...4 removed locations for participant's safety

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

- After a thorough side-by-side comparison of the two participants, we find that the rehabilitation experience is not homogenous.
- Although both participants had arguably a positive rehabilitation experience, access to formal intervention was different in each participant’s environment. Alfred had more opportunities provided to him (e.g., RDAP and obtaining a college degree). Kevin, by comparison, was asked to teach programs to other inmates.
- Kevin acknowledged that there has been a drastic change in the rehabilitation programs offered throughout the times he has been incarcerated. Kevin mentions that there is not a lot of rehabilitation happening now, based on his personal experience and lack of formal intervention given to him.
- The environments of our participants seemed to change their beliefs. By being in solitude away from family, each participant reevaluated their current support system. For Kevin, it was when he had to go to the hospital and knew that his health and family were more important. With Alfred, he had an “epiphany,” in his words, realizing this was his time to do better.
- Education played a key role in both offenders’ experience, whether it was being taught from someone else (e.g., a mentor) or teaching themselves. Both participants experienced great social support by different individuals they met while being incarcerated (e.g., other inmates or counselors). This experience also provided a means for the participants to determine who was there for them (via emotional and financial support) within their family.
- Overall, the three areas of interest (personal reflection, family involvement, and formal intervention) operated simultaneously and played a role in each participant’s experience

Limitations

- We were unable to determine for certain the type of treatment these individuals underwent. We only know what the participants wanted to share on their experiences.
- We did not have enough detailed information about formal interventions that they went through for this case study.
- We have a limited sample since we focused on only two individuals’ rehabilitation experience

Implications and Future Directions

- This case study provides a guideline to look at three specific aims in an individual’s rehabilitation experience. With greater data collection, it is possible to apply the coding structure to interviews with non-White-Collar offender samples to see whether they experience a similar rehabilitation experience.
- These findings shed light on the rehabilitation experience to show that not all experiences are the same. It is possible that more attention should be given to help those rehabilitate from various backgrounds (e.g., repeat offenders).
- We hope that within the future we will be able to draw from potential comparisons in a variety of areas including; age, gender, ethnicity, and type of offense.