Reintegrative Community Service Teams: Developing Key Practice Dimensions of the Civic Engagement Model of Offender Reentry

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Abstract

Offenders re-entering society after a period of incarceration face formidable challenges, as legal barriers and societal stigma often prevent those with criminal records from securing adequate housing, employment and other critical resources. In response, many states are re-examining systemic impediments, and researchers have begun to explore the critical role that community acceptance may have in facilitating offender reintegration. Bazemore and Stinchcomb's civic engagement model proposes that the performance of meaningful community service by offenders could: foster prosocial identity change; produce redemptive proofs; demonstrate offender competency; re-build community trust and engender public acceptance of the formerly incarcerated; and ultimately lead to legitimate job and educational opportunities. In addition, the positive social bonds that are formed as a result of community involvement may function as informal social controls for the offender (reducing the likelihood of recidivism). Bazemore and Karp have extended this theoretical model by proposing a "Civic Justice Corps" (CJC), which argues for offender community service as a reintegration policy. The CJC is now a U.S. Department of Labor grant program providing funding to organizations and agencies that seek to assist previously incarcerated youth (aged 18-24) in successful reintegration through educational and community service initiatives. However, the CJC could potentially be expanded to include older offenders, those who have been incarcerated longer, and offenders with other unique needs through the implementation of a structurally compact and flexible program model. This framework is described in the format of a new proposal---a recommendation for the establishment of reintegrative community service teams (RCST).

About the Author

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Introduction

For the first time since the Bureau of Justice Statistics began collecting the data in 1977, prison releases in the year 2010 (708,677) surpassed the number of prison admissions (703,798) (BJS, 2012). This number represents a tremendous migration of incarcerated persons into external society, a process that has been characterized by criminologists, policymakers and correctional officials alike as both "reentry" and "reintegration," as if the two terms are interchangeable and fundamentally express the same concept. However, whereas "reentry" is defined as "a second or new entry" (Merriam Webster, 2012), the definition of reintegrate is "to integrate again into an entity," and "restore to unity" (Merriam Webster, 2012). This paper argues that while the United States has clearly experienced "reentry" of released inmates (and is certain to continue experiencing this phenomenon), the nation has not experienced "reintegration," or the re-unification of offenders with mainstream society.

Indeed, utilitarian approaches to reintegration target offender risk factors, basic "resettlement" needs of offenders, and human service components.   However, researchers have also raised the importance of other factors, including offenders' development of community social bonds, public acknowledgement of offenders' redemptive efforts to repair harm and rebuild trust, reintegration "rituals," and public acceptance of the formerly incarcerated. One paradigm that emphasizes the centrality of many of these issues is the civic engagement model of reentry advanced by Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2004).

Bazemore and Karp (2004) and Bazemore and Boba (2007) have also proposed a practice dimension of this model which they refer to as a "Civic Justice Corps" (CJC). The CJC was

originally presented as a set of principles and objectives (designed to guide offender community service initiatives) grounded within a restorative justice framework. However, in the summer of 2011, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced grant awards for a multi-site, CJC-based intervention that targets justice system-involved youth aged 18-24 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). Grant recipients were allotted a planning phase prior to commencing operations, and final performance reports are not due to the DOL until the end of the funding period (which, as of this writing, has not yet been reached) (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 2011). Thus, this paper will review the civic engagement model and foundational CJC principles before offering suggestions for a secondary program model (reintegrative community service teams, or RCST) that may serve a wider range of justice system-involved individuals.

Bazemore and Stinchcomb's Civic Engagement Model of Offender Reentry: Theoretical Foundations and Practice Implications

Bazemore and Stinchcomb's article "A Civic Engagement Model of Reentry: Involving Community Through Service and Restorative Justice" raised the issue of institutional barriers and community perceptions of offenders that prevent the formerly incarcerated from assuming legitimate roles and positions (i.e., employment, parental rights, political participation) and developing the relational bonds that serve to bind most individuals to conventional society (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004). These bonds are believed by social scientists to function as informal social controls that inhibit criminal activity and thus promote public safety; therefore, facilitating opportunities for offenders to develop meaningful social and community ties is viewed by these researchers as a viable reentry strategy (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Braithwaite, 1989; Sampson & Laub, 1990). Specifically, Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2004)

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propose "a civic engagement intervention model that can be used to develop and test the impact of strategies that seek to strengthen commitments in a variety of citizenship domains associated with effective reentry" (p. 14). The goals of policies and interventions based on this model would accomplish the following: address obstacles to the development of prosocial identities for offenders; transform the public's perception of individuals who have been involved with the criminal justice system; and marshal community resources and involvement to lend informal aid and support to offenders (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

The researchers discuss the model's theoretical foundations and suggest three practice dimensions (a restorative justice framework for decision-making; civic community service performed by offenders; and promotion of voting rights/democratic participation). However, only the first two dimensions (a restorative justice framework and community service) are thoroughly explored in the original article and also have greater structural and practical implications for a reentry program. (Therefore, this paper also confines its analysis to these first two practice dimensions.) In addition, literature relative to offenders and community service is reviewed by the researchers in a subsequent article; as this research has obvious relevance to the CJC practice dimension; highlights of these findings are discussed below.

Bazemore and Boba (2007) point out that while much evidence exists regarding the impact of community service on offender recidivism, the number of evaluations of community service programs (as correctional interventions) is small in comparison with other reentry initiatives. However, the authors stress that most of the research literature they examined reported positive findings relative to the effect of community service on offender recidivism (Bazemore & Boba, 2007). They reference a formal evaluation of the Youth Corps program (an initiative that closely resembles the CJC) that found reductions in recidivism for participants

with pre-existing offense records, as well as increases in employment acquisition and retention for all participants (Jastrzab et al., 1999, as cited by Bazemore & Boba, 2007). They also cite two large-scale studies of community service impacts. The first study involved two large samples of juvenile offenders from Utah who were referred to probation and diversion programs over a five-year period. The 6,000 youth who performed community service as part of probation and the 8,000 who performed the same service in a diversion program had significant, eight and ten percent reductions (respectively) in recidivism (Butts & Snyder, 1991, as cited by Bazemore & Boba, 2007).

The second study examined the effects of community service on offenders released from Ohio prisons during the final three months of 1994. Offenders who had not participated in community service during their period of imprisonment (N=4,102) were compared with a smaller sample who had accomplished one or more service projects in the year previous to their release (N=384). The study found significant differences in the level of re-offending between the two groups. The community service performers demonstrated lower rates of recidivism (Wilkinson, 1998, as cited by Bazemore & Boba, 2007).

The CJC practice dimension's focus on community service springs from the rich theoretical foundations underlying the civic engagement model (identity transformation research, life course theory, and community social capital/social disorganization theory) (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004). Identity transformation theory references the fundamental social exchange expectation for reparation (i.e., offenders address the harm they have caused by performing publicly visible, redemptive service). The theory also encompasses public identity reconstruction through prosocial roles and interactions (i.e., productive community service undertaken by offenders in concert with non-offender community members conveys offender

trustworthiness and competence), and captures individual-level, cognitive change for the offender (internalized self-image shifts) (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

Life course research maintains that conventional, adult social bonds (agents of informal social control, such as marriage and employment) anchor individuals in prosocial roles and commitments, thereby attenuating impulses to criminally offend (Sampson & Laub, 1990). Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2004) maintain that civic service may provide similar controls by creating a framework for the development of socially supportive connections (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004). In support of this perspective, research by Uggen, Manza and Behrens (2004) suggests that in addition to the bonds of work and family, a civic reintegration bond (the offender bonded to the community through active and responsible citizenship) should be explored. Their study (involving interviews with thirty-three prisoners, parolees and felony probationers in Minnesota in 2001) revealed that almost all of the offenders comprising the sample claimed that they intended to participate in the future as "active citizens," tying civic participation to a desire to avoid criminal activity (Uggen, Manza & Behrens, 2004). However, many offenders also admitted to feeling permanently branded as convicts, and researchers cautioned that the felons they interviewed would need assistance in transforming their idealized civic roles into actual, workable arrangements that would contribute to the development of their identities as law-abiding members of the public (Uggen, Manza & Behrens, 2004).

Finally, Bazemore and Stinchcomb draw from the social disorganization/community social capital perspective. The civic engagement model envisions a more expansive, collective outcome from offender civic service, namely community self-efficacy (a goal that incorporates and reaps the benefits of offenders serving in interactive, prosocial networks). Offender civic service may strengthen relational networks, foster trust and the development of informal social

controls, and empower communities as offenders are consistently engaged in community-building service endeavors (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004). Community service projects should promote offender reparation, and provide assistance to the needy or involve making improvements to community structures/public areas or natural surroundings. Ideally, the service work would have the feature of building community capacity to sustain and govern itself (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

Though not specifically implicated as a part of the model's tripartite theoretical base, the core tenets of Braithwaite's theory of reintegrative shaming are congruent with Bazemore and Stinchcomb's work (and Braithwaite's work is cited by these researchers). Key concepts of Braithwaite's theory (social/relational interdependency, communitarianism as a condition of societies, and stigmatization/shaming) closely align with Bazemore and Stinchcomb's tripartite foundation (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Braithwaite, 1989). In addition, both perspectives heavily emphasize restorative justice as an effective approach to crime prevention and reintegration (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Braithwaite, 2000).

Clearly, the theoretical foundation of the civic engagement model synthesizes a number of perspectives from which the practice dimensions (restorative justice conferencing and offender performance of community service) are conceived of and outlined as reintegration strategies. The civic engagement model conceives of restorative justice conferencing as a framework for relationship-building, informal support, and affirmation of community norms. Civic service is characterized as an opportunity for offenders to "repair the harm," reconstruct their public identities, gain public acceptance, and potentially impact community self-efficacy (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Bazemore & Boba, 2007). These two approaches are merged

in Bazemore and Karp's proposal for a "Civic Justice Corps" (CJC) (Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Bazemore & Boba, 2007).

An Analysis and Expansion of Bazemore and Karp's Civic Justice Corps (CJC)

It should be clarified that this section analyzes Bazemore and Karp's proposed CJC practice principles and intervention objectives, all of which are not necessarily reflective of the Department of Labor's program guidelines and objectives for grantees (Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Bazemore & Boba, 2007, U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). According to Bazemore and Karp's CJC, civic service (a specific type of community service) involves parties who take into consideration the impacts that service work may have on an array of stakeholders (Bazemore & Boba, 2007). The CJC also proposes intermediate intervention objectives, with which the reintegrative community service team (RCST) model is in agreement. These objectives (discussed in a later section of this paper) include: reparation provided to communities through service; changes in the offender's personal and public image; the offender's development of relationships characterized by guardianship and social support; an increase in the offender's skills and job readiness as a consequence of service; and whether service contributes toward community efficacy.

However, RCST would expand and modify some of the practice principles proposed by the original CJC model. An overview of the CJC's propositions and practice principles is presented in Table 1 (Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Bazemore & Boba, 2007; Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004), along with points of expansion, which are included to highlight areas where design changes are advised or further action/development is needed relative to practice implications. Because many of the principles reflect similar points conducive to conceptual or

instrumental consolidation, they were combined. (Note that community service is abbreviated as

"CS," and community members are abbreviated as "CM.")

Table I.

Analysis of Civic Justice Corps (CJC) Propositions and Practice Principles

Proposition/Practice Principle	Point of Expansion
Offender CS should be voluntary as opposed to court-ordered.	N/A
CM & victims should have extensive input regarding the nature of the service project through participation in a restorative justice conference (RJC).	The service project should be grounded in a hybrid COSA-RJC framework; in addition, the victim is given the option of either meeting "face-to-face" with the offender and RCST team in the project planning stages or participating more indirectly through appointment to a project advisory committee and/or inclusion in a focus group.
CS should be publicly visible and aimed at addressing the needs of victims, young people or disadvantaged groups; this may also change the self-image of the offender.	N/A
CS would ideally strengthen relationship networks, foster informal social controls and build collective efficacy to resolve community-level problems; collective benefits of service should be identified.	N/A
CS ideally involves multiple tasks and skill-building opportunities that allow the offender to build and outwardly demonstrate competencies, changing his/her public image from liability to asset.	Potential barriers to offenders successfully completing CS should be considered, including social and/or skill deficits and competing reentry demands (employment needs, substance abuse treatment, childcare issues, etc.). The RCST model would thus promote offender success through collaboration with an existing reentry service provider (which enables RCST to be a "multi-modal" treatment strategy) and through the training of non-offender volunteers in evidence-based techniques to work effectively with offenders.
Community business people and employers would be ideal persons to plan and execute service projects with offenders.	The CJC posits that volunteers may come from the restorative justice conference, but a CS intervention would ideally identify (and tap into the pre-existing motivations of) individuals who would be willing to undergo training and volunteer their time with a high-risk population. This paper will address issues of volunteer motivation and training.
CS that involves social support, mentoring and guardianship of offenders should be more effective in sustaining desistance from crime.	A strategy or framework should be put in place to foster the development of socially supportive relationships. The COSA component of the RCST model will address this issue.
Service volunteers should set aside time to reflect on the value of the experience, share feelings, revisit commitment to collective goals, etc.	N/A
Accomplishments relative to project goal completion should be celebrated and publicly recognized.	Further elaboration on the structure of award ceremonies (the stakeholders who should be present and what types of awards/certifications should be provided) is needed. A CS intervention should exploit an opportune connection between CS and reintegration rituals that decertify deviance, showcase redemptive proofs and potentially solidify offender identity change.

Note. CS is an abbreviation for community service. CM is an abbreviation for community members.

Entries of "N/A" in the "Point of Expansion" column indicate that the reformulated

RCST model incorporates these principles "as-is" with no difference of opinion or

recommendation for further action at this time. However, this section will focus primarily on the

"Point of Expansion" entries, explain in more detail why the RCST model departs from (or adds

to) these CJC principles, and review the literature pertinent to these areas.

Modifying the Restorative Justice Conference Framework

As noted in Table I, the recommendation is that the intervention be structured within a

hybrid COSA-RJC model versus a conventional restorative justice conference (RJC). ("COSA,"

or Circles of Support and Accountability, is an intervention model that involves supportive teams

of volunteers who regularly meet with offenders. COSA is described in more detail in an

upcoming section of this paper). Restorative justice conferencing is a practice characterized by

considerable variation. However, RJC typically entails meetings that bring together offenders,

their victims, supporters of the offender, and others (i.e., a conference "convener," a

representative from the criminal justice system such as a police officer, and perhaps other

community members) (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Daly & Hayes, 2001). The meetings are

a non-adversarial forum for dialogue relative to the factors that led the offender to commit the

crime, the impact of the offense on the victim, and associated issues. The conferences also have

a decision-making stage, where all parties discuss and agree upon a reparative agreement that the

offender is expected to follow in order to "repair the harm" (i.e., the agreement might involve a

written apology or financial compensation for the victim, or a directive for the offender to

undergo counseling, perform community service, etc.) (Bazemore & Boba, 2007; Daly & Hayes,

2001).

Perhaps the most well-known research surrounding RJC is RISE (Reintegrative Shaming

Experiments). RISE tested the impact of diversionary restorative justice conferencing versus

court processing on recidivism for "drink-driving," juvenile property crime and shoplifting, and

violent crime committed by juveniles and adults up to twenty-nine years of age (Daly & Hayes, 2001; Sherman, Strang and Woods, 2000). Subjects were randomly assigned to either court or conferencing. An analysis of a one-year, before-and-after comparison of recidivism rates revealed a large decrease in reoffending by violent offenders (38 crimes per 100 offenders, annually), a small increase in reoffending by "drink drivers" (6 crimes per 100 offenders a year), and no significant difference in recidivism for juvenile shoplifters or property offenders (Sherman, Strang and Woods, 2000). However, findings indicated that offenders assigned to the conference group conveyed higher levels of satisfaction with the procedural fairness of their experiences in comparison with offenders who were assigned to court (Sherman, Strang and Woods, 2000).

While many RJC interventions take place at the pre-sentencing/diversionary stage, RJC may also be implemented at other points in the criminal justice process (i.e., in conjunction with court rulings, or post-incarceration). The CJC envisioned by Bazemore and Karp is a reentry/reintegration initiative; therefore the restorative justice conference is employed post-incarceration (Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Daly & Hayes, 2001). This is an important distinction to make, as the offenders in the proposed CJC (unlike participants in the RISE experiments) would have already served prison sentences. As well, adult imprisonment and reentry in present-day United States is an endemic sociocultural experience, involving not only the deprivations typically associated with institutionalization, but also formidable challenges for released offenders who return to a society that often continues punishment (through restrictions on specific rights and privileges), and engages in more subtle forms of stigmatization and exclusion.

However, Bazemore and Boba (2007) argue for a reentry model that focuses on "offender obligations to repair the harm caused by the offense" (p.51) and refers to (and conceives of)

offender community service as a "service obligation" (p. 36). Earlier, Bazemore and Karp (2004) opined that "serving a sentence does not suffice despite the misnomer that it 'pays a debt to society'" (p.14). Clearly, the importance and relevance of the social exchange principle ("doing good" to counteract "previous bad"), and the symbolic and instrumental importance of offender demonstrations of repentance and remittance of redemptive, productive service (signaling trustworthiness and reparative efforts to victims and society) cannot be discounted. However, the concern here is the manner in which offender civic service is fundamentally characterized and how it might be perceived by offenders and others. Indeed, Bazemore and Boba (2007) express the concern that "the civic community service model of reentry must overcome numerous barriers and may be vulnerable to being perceived as yet another means of extending punishment" (p. 50). Thus, the CJC process by which the community service opportunity is crafted for the offender (an additional, post-incarceration obligation mediated within the context of a restorative justice conference) may be ill-timed. Agreements to "repair the harm" and perform service that are mediated within the context of these conferences may be appropriate in many cases as part of a pre-sentencing, diversionary program. However (as previously emphasized), offenders reentering society may themselves have been harmed by the prison experience and may be overwhelmed by reentry; thus, they may be better served by an alternate approach.

The suggested alternative to the restorative justice conference aligns with positive psychology-based models of reentry (such as the Good Lives Model) which stress that modern interventions carefully choose the language that is used to describe to offenders the opportunities or treatment goals for behavioral change. In other words, approaches that expound the benefits of service while remaining optimistic and future-focused may be more useful (Ward & Maruna,

2007). This "positive approach" also ties into RCST's specific recommendation to unitize the intervention with socially supportive, intimate teams of volunteers (one offender and three to five trained, non-offender volunteers). The group would be united in a spirit of fraternity and team work, and would meet regularly to collaborate on the performance of a meaningful community service project.

Within this recommended framework, civic service is not presented as an obligation, but as an opportunity to be part of a culturally-valued team that is making a significant contribution to the public good by completing an important (even prestigious) community project. The fact that the offender is "repairing the harm" and rebuilding the trust that was lost due to his or her criminal behavior is also a crucial feature of RCST. However, this goal is anticipated to be achieved as a consequence of productive service on the RCST team, and does not require adherence to an RJC-mediated agreement (which is one prominent feature of a process often associated with alternative sanctions in a pre-sentencing/diversionary context).

Clearly, the RCST framework does not imply that the victim is unimportant in a community service intervention, or that the victim should be excluded. In fact, RCST would give victims the option of meeting with the offender within the context of one of the initial RCST team meetings (although a mediator would likely be involved in this case). Victims (and offenders) would then have the opportunity to discuss their feelings about the crime (if they so desired) and both parties could participate in service project planning. However, research has shown that many individuals given the opportunity to participate in victim-offender mediation (40-60%) declined to do so. Many of these individuals were victims who cited fear of meeting the offender as the reason for not participating (Umbreit, Coates, & Vos, 2002). Thus, RCST provides for this contingency by offering a more indirect (yet elevated and empowering) role for

victims who may not be interested in meeting personally with the offender. Victims would be given the opportunity to serve on a project advisory committee, or to participate in focus groups related to the intervention. In whatever capacity victims choose to participate, victims (as well as the community at-large) would have the knowledge that offenders are meeting regularly with trained teams of volunteers designed to anchor offenders in law-abiding social networks and activities.

Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA): A Canadian-based Model

As this paper has recommended drawing from the COSA model in designing a community service intervention, this section provides a description of the model and reviews research surrounding Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA). It should be noted at the outset that the sample sizes of the COSA studies reviewed in this section are small; however, the results are encouraging (relative to recidivism and other measures) as well as the finding that results are not contextual (location-specific). Due to the burgeoning international interest in this intervention model, it is likely that additional COSA projects will generate future evaluations and additional research findings.

Developed in Canada in 1994 by members of the Mennonite faith community, COSA originated in response to public trepidation and outrage after a high-risk and high-profile child sex offender was released from prison (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007; Wilson, Bates & Vollm, 2010). Two years later (in 1996), The Mennonite Central Committee in Ontario created a manual for the administration of COSA circles and contracted with Correctional Services Canada (CSC) to continue the initiative. As the COSA model and COSA practice utilized volunteers, CSC was apparently awakened to the crucial role that communities can play in facilitating reentry and aiding in the protection of the public (Wilson, Bates & Vollm, 2010; Wilson, Cortoni

& McWhinnie, 2009). COSA circle initiatives have subsequently been implemented in the

United Kingdom and the United States as well (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

A COSA "circle" is made up of four to seven trained volunteer members who enter into

an agreement or covenant with the core member (the offender). The covenant stipulates what the

volunteer members expect from the offender (i.e., to obey court orders and treatment plans) and

what the offender can expect from others in the circle (confidentiality, social and emotional

support, and accountability functions). The circle meets on a weekly basis and may involve

social and personal activities such as meeting for coffee or lunch, or accompanying the offender

to his appointments (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007). The overall mission and purpose of COSA is

to address community and victim fears; assist offender reintegration; provide long-term social

support and a family-type environment for offenders who may be isolated or community pariahs;

and ultimately to reduce the risk of recidivism (Heise et al., 2000, as cited by Hannem &

Petrunik, 2007).

Studies of COSA initiatives show that the circles are effective in reducing recidivism.

Wilson, Picheca and Prinzo (2007) compared the outcomes of sixty high-risk sexual offenders

who (after their release from prison) participated in COSA circles in South-Central Ontario,

Canada, versus the outcomes of sixty high-risk sexual offenders who did not participate in

COSA subsequent to their release from prison.   The groups were matched *a priori*, a process

whereby the comparison group was chosen in a calculated manner so that its constituents would

more closely correspond with the COSA or treatment group (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

The criteria included ensuring that participants in both groups: were matched as to previous

involvement in sexual offender treatment; evidenced comparable scoring on the General

Statistical Information on Recidivism Scale (GSIR), an instrument that measures criminality and

risk level; had the same or approximate release dates to ensure similarity of the social and political conditions offenders would be released to (and for ease of measuring and comparing time length to recidivism); and all had been under (WED) orders prior to release. WED orders are enacted when a determination is made by the National Parole Board of Canada that an offender is likely to reoffend prior to sentence completion; when such a determination is made, the offender must remain in detention until sentence completion. The researchers noted that offenders under WED orders could reasonably be considered "high risk" (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

The mean range follow-up time for the COSA participants was 54.67 months in comparison to the mean range follow-up time of 52.47 months for the comparison group. Offenders in the COSA group had a 5% recidivism rate for sexual offending (versus 16.7% in the control group), 15% recidivism in all types of violent offenses, including sexual offenses (versus 35% in the control group) and an overall recidivism rate of 28.3% (relative to any form of re-offending) versus 43.4% in the control group (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

A subsequent replication study (Wilson, Cortoni & McWhinnie, 2009) examined a sample of forty-four high-risk sexual offenders involved in COSA in comparison with forty-four high-risk sexual offenders not involved in COSA (both groups had been released to the community at the end of their sentences). This study used the same group matching process and criteria as the aforementioned South-Central Ontario study, and the findings were also encouraging. Offenders in the COSA circles demonstrated a recidivism rate of 2.3% for sexual offenses (versus 13.7% in the control group), a 9.1% recidivism rate for all types of violent offenses, including sexual (versus 34.1% in the control group) and an 11.4% recidivism rate for all types of offenses (versus 38.7% in the control group). (It should be noted that while the

replication study clearly states that offender participation in COSA was not required, the South-Central Ontario study does not specifically state this. However, a participant survey conducted in relation to the South-Central Ontario study implied offender participation was voluntary, as one survey question queried offenders as to why they chose to participate in COSA) (Wilson, Cortoni & McWhinnie, 2009; Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

Recidivism statistics do not capture the totality of research findings relative to COSA initiatives, however. Wilson, Picheca and Prinzo (2007) submitted survey questionnaires to COSA stakeholders in the South-Central Ontario, Canada, pilot project (including "core members," or offender participants, volunteer support circle members, professionals associated with the project, and members of the community). Responses from members of the community indicated that they felt safer with the knowledge that offenders were participating in the circles (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007). The offenders' responses were also quite illuminating. When asked why they initially decided to enter a circle, eighty-three percent indicated they made the decision because they lacked any other social supports (Wilson, Cortoni, & McWhinnie, 2009). When asked how the circle had helped them to adjust and cope in the community upon reentry, approximately two-thirds of the offenders indicated that they were helped by the circle with matters such as finding employment, obtaining identification documents and emotional support. When asked what their reentry experience would have been like had COSA not been available to them, the vast majority of the participants indicated they would have become isolated, lonely, and powerless. As well, two-thirds responded they would have had trouble with relationships and would have resumed offending (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

Thus, the COSA component of RCST would provide the guardianship, social support and mentoring that the CJC recommends as an ideal component of a civic service initiative.

(However, as indicated in Figure I, this component is somewhat of a hybrid, or "COSA-RJC," as it incorporates the optional victim-participation feature of the RJC, and may not incorporate all of the features of the original COSA model.) Additionally, the authors of the COSA survey and underlying research study note that "COSA is an excellent example of the community taking an active role in managing risk in its midst. However, the unpalatable nature of our target population continues to make solicitation of both volunteers and funding difficult." (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007, p. 301). It could be argued that a CJC (or RCST) intervention might not face the same level of difficulty as COSA in regard to volunteer recruitment, because the former models do not target sexual offenders per se. Thus, volunteers who would be averse to working with sexual offenders might not have the same reticence relative to other types of offenders. However, identifying potential pools of motivated volunteers (as well as outlining non-offender, volunteer training objectives) is clearly a necessary component of an offender community service program that relies on unpaid staff. Thus, the next section discusses these issues.

Volunteer Motivation, Recruitment and Training: A Review of the Literature

A percentage of the non-offender volunteers would likely consist of graduate students drawn from one or more universities. Academic disciplines represented might include criminology/criminal justice, sociology, psychology, counseling, and social work. Existing and/or former department of corrections (DOC) prison volunteers would also be solicited for participation. These individuals could come from various pockets within the prison volunteer sector, including religious services, drug and alcohol services, life skills units, educational areas, and reentry/transitional services.

The rationale that university students would be interested in participating in an offender community service initiative is based on the observation that students and universities across the

country have already demonstrated a commitment to community engagement. Campus Contact (2010) is a national association of higher education dedicated to public and community service, and university-based, civic engagement. The coalition is comprised of over 1,000 university and college presidents who in turn represent more than six million students (Campus Contact, 2010). The organization's 2010 Executive Summary (and Annual Membership Survey Results) indicated that students had contributed in excess of 382 million hours of community service in 2009-2010, resulting in an astonishing $7.96 billion dollars worth of service to their communities (a figure based on Independent Sector's 2009 monetary value of volunteer time) (Campus Compact, 2010). Community service may also attract students by providing the opportunity to participate in cutting-edge research (i.e., if a community-based program collected data and was evaluated) and by offering the chance to pursue personal academic and professional interests and goals.

It is also believed that those with prison volunteer experience have pre-existing motivations for working with offenders that can be potentially tapped for this project. Tewksbury and Dabney (2004) conducted an analysis of the characteristics of prison volunteers at a medium security prison in the southern United States. The results indicated a surprising degree of dedication and commitment; a large majority of volunteers had been involved for several years, with more than three-quarters having volunteered for more than one year. The researchers also noted that the volunteers weren't actively recruited, but had approached the facility on their own initiative. They were also often willing to endure long commutes to the prison. Volunteers reported having a concern for others and a commitment to religious values, which motivated them to become involved. Tewksbury and Dabney (2004) did raise the concern that most volunteers were concentrated in religious programs (91%) versus other types of

outreaches (educational, recreational, cultural), which raises a valid concern since this RCST proposal does not encompass specific religious content. However, research findings (from the Ready4Work Initiative) have indicated that religiously-inclined individuals became involved in reentry initiatives even when the prospect of sharing their faith was either not an option or could only be done if the offender asked an explicit question about religion (Bauldry, Korom-Djakovic, McClanahan, McMaken & Kotloff, 2009).

Certainly, an offender community service program need not limit its potential volunteer pool to students and prison volunteers. Other options include retirees, members of community churches and secular non-profits (who may already be attracted to helping vulnerable or outcast members of society), and individuals interested in a volunteer experience that enables them to explore what it would be like to work with offenders (i.e. those considering a career in corrections, probation, counseling, etc.). And consistent with the CJC recommendation that volunteers be employers or business persons, it is likely that a number of individuals from some of the areas mentioned (i.e., prison volunteers, members of local churches) would also have professional roles in the community. However, regardless of which community groups volunteers are culled from, an evidence-based training program should be developed and implemented to enable community members to work effectively with offenders. The importance of this feature of RCST is underscored by research demonstrating that even subtle modeling of antisocial attitudes by probation officers can result in a lack of positive behavioral change in the lives of offenders as well as in increased recidivism rates (Andrews, 1980, as cited by Van Voorhis & Salisbury, 2009). In addition, it is clear from the literature that cognitive-behavioral programs reduce recidivism (Andrews et al., 1990; Antonowicz & Ross, 1994; Garrett, 1985; Izzo & Ross, 1990; Lipsey, 1992; Losel, 1995, as cited by Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006).

Andrews & Bonta (2006) report that high quality, cognitive-behavioral/social learning-based

approaches to treatment have accomplished reductions in reoffending as high as twenty to thirty

percent (as cited by Van Voorhis & Salisbury, 2009). Treatment techniques from these programs

(such as such as positive reinforcement, effective disapproval, skill building and prosocial

modeling) are thus indicated as targets for RCST volunteer skills training, as these techniques

may be realistically transferrable to the RCST teamwork setting.

As well, the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model (currently the reigning paradigm in

corrections) implicates the use of cognitive-behavioral and social learning treatment strategies

(Andrews & Bonta, 2010). The RNR model also cites several criminogenic needs (or risk

factors) that have been found to be predictive of recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Four of

these risk factors (antisocial personality, antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, and low levels

of involvement or satisfaction in prosocial leisure activities) are specifically targeted by the

RCST. It is anticipated that the non-offender volunteers (trained to effectively and consistently

model prosocial behaviors and attitudes) would develop a social relationship with the offender

through regular meetings related to the community service project. Thus, much of the offender's

leisure time that could potentially be spent with antisocial companions who model procriminal

attitudes would be replaced by involvement with the RCST.

These features of the RCST also align with another characteristic of effective programs,

in that successful interventions maintain a "reinforcer-to-punishment ratio" of 4:1. Successful

programs also ensure that offenders spend at least 40% of their time in the program developing

prosocial skills (Gendreau, French & Gionet, 2004, as cited by Listwan, Cullen & Latessa,

2006). The process of serving on a long-term, reintegrative community service team would

allow the offender to spend more of his overall time practicing prosocial behaviors, developing

prosocial skills, and adapting cognitively to prosocial thinking patterns, norms and values. In addition to rewarding the offender for demonstrating prosocial behavior in the teamwork setting (i.e., volunteers' demonstrations of approval or praise) the offender would also be rewarded for his service and potentially for other milestones through reintegration rituals that confer certifications. (These rituals and other incentives will be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper.) Therefore, the RCST greatly increases the number of possible "reinforcers," to help achieve and maintain the desired "reinforcer-to-punisher" ratio of 4:1.

Finally, Listwan, Cullen and Latessa (2006) note that successful programs have the quality of being multi-faceted and concentrated enough to be effective (Allen, MacKenzie, & Hickman, 2001; Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Gendreau, 1996; Lipsey, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Wilson, Bouffard, & MacKenzie, 2005, as cited by Listwan, Cullen & Latessa, 2006). As indicated in Table 1, offenders who purpose to complete service agreements might be overwhelmed by the competing demands of post-prison life that reentry imposes. In addition, the effects of long-term incarceration may result in interpersonal and other skill deficits that could potentially detract from the offender's ability to successfully complete a service project. Thus, the RCST would modify the CJC by recommending the initiative as a functional enhancement (or overlay) to an existing reentry program that provides comprehensive and traditional reentry services (i.e., housing and employment assistance, counseling, substance abuse treatment or referrals). The RCST model would then become part of a multi-modal treatment strategy, and would thus increase the chances for offender success on the service project through collaboration and communication with the core reentry provider. In cases where comprehensive reentry service providers are not available, the RCST could work with a coordinator from the transitional services division of the state's department of corrections (DOC)

and/or community corrections agency, or any single service provider or counselor the offender

may be receiving assistance from. Thus, the RCST would endeavor to build a strategic alliance

with persons and institutions who may already be working with the offender in a related capacity

to address his or her needs.

If the offender successfully completes a service project, the CJC recommends that his or

her accomplishments be celebrated and publicly recognized (Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Bazemore

& Boba, 2007). However, this recommendation could be expanded to exploit the potential

linkage of success in service work to reintegration rituals and formal certification awarded by

representatives of the criminal justice system. This connection would enable the offender's

achievements to attain public legitimacy, facilitate community acceptance, and reinforce

offender gains (the solidification of a prosocial identity and the reinforcement of the third, civic

reintegration bond proposed by Uggen, Manza and Behrens) (Uggen, Manza and Behrens, 2004).

Thus, the next section of this paper views the potential value of reintegration "rituals," as

discussed in the literature.

Reintegration Rituals (Shadd Maruna)

Maruna has proposed that one barrier to successful reentry may be the lack of a

structured reintegration ritual that publicly elevates the status of the released offender, thus

fostering offender identity change, public image transformation, and community re-acceptance

(Maruna, 2011). In Maruna's paper "Reentry as a Rite of Passage," the researcher seeks to

invigorate interest in the value of rituals in criminology (Maruna, 2011). Maruna draws heavily

on the work of Emile Durkheim, who argued that rituals have an influential role in cultural

dynamics (Durkheim 1895/1996, as cited by Maruna, 2011).

A definition of the concept of ritual is needed here. Maruna characterizes rituals as mechanisms of collective, shared attention and emotion which give rise to a temporary mutual reality, serving to generate unity and symbols of group membership (Collins, 2004, as cited by Maruna, 2011). As Maruna notes, the public is well-versed in the criminal justice process; fluency with the rituals of arrest, conviction and incarceration is commonplace. Even if individuals don't experience these rituals personally, the media (through television dramas that feature police, courts, crime scenes, and convictions) frequently and vividly communicate these rituals of identity degradation (Maruna, 2011; Sparks, 1992, as cited by Maruna, 2011). Indeed, the punishment process (or the process by which the convicted person's status of citizen or person is transformed to offender status) is a well-structured, systemic and effective ritual. Maruna notes that as a society we make "an impressive ritual of punishment" but in regard to the process of reintegration, we typically decline to establish rituals, and reintegration unfolds somewhat privately (Maruna, 2011, p. 4). Such a lack of ritual around reentry may explain the high rate of reintegration failure (Maruna, 2011).

Of course, there are some exceptions to this systemic propensity to bypass the use of ritual in reentry, one of which has been the establishment of drug courts, whereby offender participants often have their accomplishments lauded by the court (Wexler, 2001, as cited by Maruna, 2011). However, Maruna's overall observation is that Anglo-American cultures are particularly deficient at reaccepting and reabsorbing individuals with criminal records back into mainstream society. The researcher specifically notes society's "failure to understand the dynamics of ritual in facilitating crucial life transitions like reintegration" (Maruna, 2011, p. 4). With the exception of a small number of individuals who may have had their offenses pardoned or their records expunged, sanctions imposed by the criminal justice system do not appear to end

at all, as legal barriers in various areas preclude instrumental and social reintegration. Maruna

notes that "the resulting cycle of stigma and recidivism is predictable and tragic, but could

conceivably be broken with rituals of reintegration, among other factors" (Maruna, 2011, p. 5).

The literature Maruna has reviewed suggests that rituals should be emotional events that

allow participants to temporarily transcend commonplace, everyday existence (Collins, 2004, as

cited by Maruna, 2011). Maruna argues that ideally, reintegration rituals would involve

expressions of penitence and remorse by the offender for harms wrought. However, the

researcher also maintains that as offenders have also been hurt by the punishment process, rituals

should be more closely aligned with reconciliation processes that arise after a conflict (Maruna,

2011). Johnson (2002) has made the argument that reintegration necessitates "a mutual effort at

reconciliation, where offender and society work together to make amends—for hurtful crimes

and hurtful punishments—and move forward" (p. 328, as cited by Maruna, 2011). This

sentiment is in line with RCST's recommendation that community service projects be framed

and organized as team endeavors versus service obligations that seek to satisfy "unpaid debt."

Another characteristic of effective reintegration rituals is that their effect be reinforced

through multiple re-occurrences in order to sustain the long-term processes of reintegration and

abstention from crime (Maruna, 2011). However, Maruna cautions that even multiple

reintegrative rituals can be effectively subverted by subsequent or simultaneous experiences of

degradation rites. Persons with criminal records frequently undergo demeaning treatment by

police officers and other individuals, even when decades have passed since their crimes were

committed (Maruna 2001, as cited by Maruna, 2011). Maruna also notes that neo-Durkheimian

theory (from which he has derived his recommendations on effective rituals) emphasizes that it is

possible to develop rituals that are ineffective and impact ritual participants negatively.

Similarly, Collins (2004) has described rituals that are empty or "forced." Certainly most people can relate to experiencing these types of experiences (i.e., the individual who becomes disenchanted with routinized church services and leaves that church in search of one with more meaningful ceremonies) (as cited by Maruna, 2011).

Clearly, rituals need to have value and meaning for participants, and in the case of reintegration rituals, there may be an opportunity to focus on aspects of the offender's reentry process that have been neglected in other domains. Maruna cites research by Attrill and Liell (2007), in which prisoners and probationers expressed their opinions that the risk assessment process focused too much attention on one's criminal past and insufficient attention on what the offenders had accomplished in terms of reform (as cited by Maruna, 2011). While Maruna maintains that risk assessment will most likely continue to function in a critical measurement capacity, it should not be a prominent feature of reintegration rituals. Instead, rituals can provide an ideal forum where the focus turns toward the various accomplishments and progress the offender has made in reentry (Maruna, 2011). The researcher also stresses that reintegration rituals, if they are to have significance, should require both symbolic and literal certification (i.e., certificates of "good conduct" or "rehabilitation" can be awarded to offenders) (Choo, 2007; Meisenhelder, 1977, as cited by Maruna, 2011). In addition, Maruna opines that certification by the state (i.e., by police officers or judges) could have a measurable impact on how offenders view the criminal justice system, eliminating the psychological need to "condemn the condemners" and thereby pulling "ex-offenders more deeply into mainstream society" (Maruna, 2001, p.163).

However, the researcher does concede that even though offenders may make efforts to contribute to the community in some way (i.e., through charitable work) this does not indicate

that these individuals have no risk of future criminality (Maruna, 2011). Nevertheless, if a

criminal justice system fails to facilitate and support opportunities for identity change and

redemption, then this same system cannot expect improved reentry outcomes (Maruna, 2001).

Public involvement is also a factor, as reintegration is a reciprocal process, requiring the

participation of the released offender (repentance and avoidance of further crime) and the

community (forgiveness and inclusion). In order to facilitate this exchange, reintegration rituals

would not be clandestine but open to the public view, thus reaffirming principles and values of

repentance, reform, redemption and forgiveness (Maruna, 2011).

These characteristics of rituals are described as potential features of reintegration

ceremonies occurring within the context of an RCST intervention. However, up to this point in

the discussion, the full RCST model has not been presented. Thus, the next section defines the

model framework and its core sub-components, as well as the RCST model process flow

(sequencing) and linkages to external entities and events.

The Reintegrative Community Service Team (RCST) Intervention Model

In Figure 1 RCST is illustrated as a nested model with a concentric circle format.

Criminogenic needs are targeted by the intervention, so they appear at the center of the model

(i.e., antisocial associates and attitudes, antisocial personality, poor use of leisure time). The

next ring (social learning, cognitive-behavioral techniques) represent the type of training the

non-offender volunteers will receive, so that they positively impact (and work effectively with)

the offender participant. The next concentric circle is the community service component, which

affords the offender the opportunity to "practice" the prosocial role of productive community

member, build interpersonal and work-related skills, and generate a "redemptive proof" to

facilitate community trust and acceptance. The next ring reflects that the community service

team is housed within a small COSA group structure (socially supportive group that meets on a regular basis) that also incorporates elements of a conventional restorative justice conference (i.e., the victim has the opportunity to meet with the group, share feelings and provide input relative to the service project). The final and ultimate circle packages all of the components that comprise the RCST framework.

The RCST framework is not only a structurally compact intervention (addressing criminogenic needs, providing social support, facilitating interpersonal skills development, and providing a "bridge" to community acceptance), it is flexible relative to program features. For example, with the assistance of project advisory committees (addressed in the next section), RCST teams can customize projects according to the skill sets an offender already possesses or needs to develop, which may not be the case with CJC programs that provide training in specific areas. RCST may also work with older offenders who are unsuitable for initiatives that place younger offenders on work crews that require physical labor. In addition, graduate students who serve on RCST teams can provide assistance to offenders who (having already attained their GED or high school diploma) are interested in pursuing a college education or other certifications. Finally, the intimate group structure (which includes caring volunteers specifically trained to work with offenders) might be more appropriate and effective for sexual offenders, individuals who have been incarcerated longer and could benefit from individualized and concentrated support as they readjust to community life, and those who release to the community with minimal social supports (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2007).

Figure 1

RCST Component Model

Figure 2

RCST Structure and Process Flow

Figure 2 presents the RCST model lifecycle, and reflects how the various stakeholders

(victims, offenders, community volunteers, service providers, ritual officials) are linked as well

as the sequencing of stages. As previously indicated, victims would be contacted about the

RCST initiative and offered the opportunity to meet with the offender and RCST team

personally, or to serve on a project advisory committee and/or focus group. By assigning this

type of role to crime victims, their input, feelings and needs would be acknowledged, and the

value that they have in contributing to the overarching goal of public safety and the reduction of

crime would be emphasized. However, RCST departs from the CJC model in that group

meeting(s) do not involve the drafting of a mediated service agreement that represents a service obligation of the offender. Instead, victims, offenders and volunteers meet to discuss ideas for service projects that all members of the RCST team will take equal responsibility for completing. As to victims who choose to be project advisory committee members instead of meeting with the RCST, these individuals could assist the initiative by voicing their support of the RCST to the wider community (including victim advocacy groups) and by researching prospective service projects. In line with CJC principles, ideal service projects would assist victims of crime, disadvantaged groups, vulnerable populations (i.e., children/youth or the elderly) or address other needs with the objective of building community efficacy (Bazemore & Boba, 2007; Bazemore & Karp, 2004; Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

Additional Offender Characteristics and Study Design

Thus far the role of victims and the nature and motivations of non-offender volunteers for RCST have been examined in this paper, as well as some specific attributes of offenders who might be likely to benefit from this intervention. However, some additional recommendations relative to offender characteristics should be made. The core offender demographic (i.e., for initial demonstration projects) is male, incarcerated and close to release (or released), and identified as high or medium risk by accepted risk-assessment instruments (such as the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory) (Van Voorhis, 2009). Men who lack protective social bonds (i.e., healthy marital relationships) and/or stable or satisfying employment may be suitable candidates to participate in RCST. The rationale behind targeting marital and job status is based on research that reflects that men with an absence of--or having poor quality--family and employment bonds are less bound to conventional society and therefore lack the informal social controls that would foster desistance from criminality (Laub & Sampson, 1993).

Thus, offender participation in RCST will enable researchers to assess whether offenders have formed social bonds with non-offender volunteers (and possibly other prosocial community members) as an intermediate intervention objective that may influence desistance from further crime. It should be emphasized as well that RCST is ideally conceptualized as a functional enhancement to an existing reentry program that provides traditional reentry services (housing and employment assistance, counseling, substance abuse treatment or referrals). The base reentry program would not only concentrate on providing offenders' immediate and basic needs, but would communicate (and collaborate) with RCST on issues that impact offender success in completing the service project. RCST could also be implemented as a sub-initiative through a state department of corrections' or state community corrections' existing transitional services program. Collaboration with any of these entities would also ensure that the control group in a demonstration project/study would not be left without any services, but would still partake of the core service provider's/service coordinator's benefits. However, as previously indicated, the absence of a comprehensive base program does not preclude the implementation of RCST, as RCST can also collaborate with counselors or others closely involved with the offender's reentry who are working to ensure that the offender's basic needs are met.

Regardless of the nature of RCST's supporting affiliate, high or medium risk male offenders (who may be ineligible or otherwise unsuitable for other CJC programs) would be solicited to participate in RCST. Those individuals who volunteer for participation would complete the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI) to assess risk and provide baseline measurements of a number of factors known to constitute appropriate targets for intervention (the LSCMI would be administered at the beginning of the project and at service project completion). In the case of a demonstration project/study, RCST's initial plan for

organizing groups of subjects deemed that offenders who volunteer for participation would be

assigned to either a control group (receiving only the base reentry program's—or other

provider's--- existing services) or the treatment group (those who would receive "enhanced

services" through participation in RCST).   (A third group of offenders who decline participation

in RCST--but who also receive basic reentry services--would also be tracked.) However, there

are some concerns with this design. Should the program be successful (resulting in many

benefits for offenders in the treatment group), then offenders who opted to participate but were

not selected for the treatment group would have essentially been short-changed. As well, there

may not be sufficient offender volunteers for the study to adequately populate two groups

interested in participation (those assigned to the treatment group and those who assigned to the

control group).   Thus, another option for participant grouping could be a treatment group of all

who volunteer for RCST, and a control group of all who decline participation. However, in

order to minimize self-selection bias, researchers have suggested administering a survey at the

beginning of an intervention to assess offender motivation. Survey results would identify highly

motivated, moderately motivated, and unmotivated subjects from both groups, thus controlling

for motivation in later analyses that seek to determine whether there was a treatment effect from

the intervention (Bradshaw, Roseborough & Umbreit, 2006; Latimer, Dowden & Muise, 2005).

Regardless of design, however, offenders in the treatment group would be assigned to

reintegrative community service teams. Non-offender, volunteer team members would utilize

evidence-based treatment strategies to help offenders develop skills and prosocial attitudes while

collaborating on a "real world" service project. Each team would be composed of three to five

prosocial/non-offender volunteers and one offender. RCST team meetings could begin while the

offender is still incarcerated (but proximate to his release date) and continue once the offender

has been released to the community.

If a demonstration project of RCST were to result in longitudinal, successful outcomes

(via measures such as improved LS/CMI scores as assessed at project completion, desistance

from crime, reduced substance abuse, etc.) then former offender participants may subsequently

choose to "return" and assume non-offender volunteer roles on new RCST teams. In this regard,

project sustainability, offender empowerment and offender public image reformation would be

significantly enhanced. If offender participant "recycling" is included as a feasible objective in

an RCST long-term project plan, then students and other, initial non-offender volunteers from

the community would functionally "seed" the intervention with the intent of eventually drawing

in proportionately more offender ex-participants to assume key leadership roles. This might also

have a modest effect in reducing the future volunteer recruitment burden.

Regardless of who constitutes the volunteer pool, each reintegrative community service

team would not only extend automatic social acceptance to the offender, but would also provide

him with the opportunity to practice and solidify a prosocial role and earn both symbolic and

"certifiable" redemption through participation in an altruistic community project.   Offender

participants should also be provided with tangible tokens that communicate group inclusion and

solidarity (i.e., team jackets or shirts, monogrammed day planners, business cards, etc.). In other

words, it should be clear to the offender that he now belongs to (and is warmly accepted by) a

prosocial community group. The offender is an integral, valued (and interdependent) member of

the RCST and it is hoped that the offender will eventually view himself as having a similar

relationship with the larger, mainstream (law-abiding) community. Thus, the lure of criminal

sub-cultures may potentially be attenuated as the offender has found a prosocial place of "belonging."

The successful completion of the project on the part of the group and the offender would culminate in formal acknowledgement (a public ceremony) that celebrates the offender's accomplishments and acknowledges his transition to the status of productive citizen (inclusive of redemption, restoration of honor, and community acceptance). While RCST non-offender volunteers, victims associated with RCST, the offender's supportive family and friends, and even members of the general public would ideally be in attendance, formal certification should (preferably) be awarded to the offender by representatives of the criminal justice system or local governance. This certification should not merely serve as confirmation of public service accomplishments, but should also have functional utility in other domains. In other words, this officially-endorsed certification or "ID card" (which can be updated annually to annotate additional years of crime-free living and/or additional public service work) should have a favorable impact on employer hiring decisions and applications for educational/training programs.

As indicated, the certification should be awarded in an initial public ceremony that celebrates service work completion. However, a series of smaller (even greatly scaled-down) ceremonial events should be planned to help reinforce, maintain, and solidify the offender's new identity and community image. It is not practical or necessary that each event constitute an elaborate display, but each event should be planned so as to be meaningful to the offender (i.e., celebrating hard-won milestones or achievements in various areas, such as completing a parenting class or an educational goal). A related issue concerns aftercare for offenders (post-RCST participation). Aftercare may be provided in one or more of the following ways: repeat

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service on a subsequent RCST team (as previously mentioned); the facilitation of connections to other prosocial community groups such as churches and charitable organizations; periodic RCST focus groups; and/or other pre-existing aftercare measures as provided by a base reentry program.

RCST and Principles of Effective Correctional Programs

Finally, it should be noted that while the RCST program design incorporates less-studied features such as reintegration rituals and the COSA framework for team structure, RCST does embody many of the features of empirically-proven correctional programs. In the article "How to Prevent Prisoner Re-entry Programs from Failing: Insights from Evidence-Based Corrections," Listwan, Cullen and Latessa note that effective programs commonly exhibit many of the same characteristics, including: the targeting of high-risk offenders with many criminogenic needs; the use of behavioral and cognitive methods; the employment of rewards for prosocial behavior; the localization of interventions in the offenders' community; the matching of offender-specific capabilities and learning patterns to program features; and the quality of being multi-faceted and concentrated enough to be effective (Allen, MacKenzie, & Hickman, 2001; Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Cullen & Gendreau, 2000; Gendreau, 1996; Lipsey, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Wilson, Bouffard, & MacKenzie, 2005, as cited by Listwan, Cullen & Latessa, 2006). As demonstrated in this paper, RCST (as a programmatic overlay) has all of these components. Thus it is asserted that the RCST intervention model may be one strategy for addressing the issue of how to effectively reintegrate inmates who are releasing from prison facilities in the United States. RCST addresses community concerns and community barriers (public safety, mainstream distrust of offenders, societal stigma and exclusion) as well as offender needs for a core foundation of prosocial acceptance, opportunities for social and work

skills development, and the ability to demonstrate competency and trustworthiness through

productive service that also serves to "repair the harm" caused by prior offending.

Practical Applications: Additional Considerations, Challenges and Limitations

As with all reentry initiatives, there are bound to be obstacles and limitations that affect

program implementation and success. Interest in a CJC program model adhering to the design

outlined in this paper may not manifest, and thus grant funding opportunities may not arise that

would provide financial resources needed to launch demonstration projects. And despite the

recommendations for (and research behind) volunteer motivation and recruitment suggested in

this paper, the possibility does exist that sufficient volunteer interest could fail to manifest for

any number of reasons. One obvious drawback may be that since reentry work in the community

entails a degree of risk that differs from prison-based work, individuals interested in volunteering

with offenders may decline to participate in RCST. In addition (and as seen in many restorative

justice initiatives), many victims may decline participation, whether through direct contact with

the offender and RCST team or as members of a project advisory committee (Umbreit, Coates &

Vos, 2002).

There is also the potential issue of offender participation attrition. As previously noted,

the reintegrative community service team could begin to meet with the offender while he is still

incarcerated and about to be released; however, once the offender is released he will experience a

radical change in environment and lifestyle. It is anticipated that a measure of drop-out from the

RCST program could occur during this transitional and stressful period. The offender will have

more options and freedoms in terms of the use of his time than he did while incarcerated (at

which time project participation may have seemed appealing in comparison to the limited

options for engagement that imprisonment offered). In addition, aggregate load relative to

offender reentry obligations and challenges is also a concern. If an offender's time and energies are already heavily scheduled and targeted toward obligatory activities (i.e., substance abuse treatment, counseling, probation appointments, and child support payments) then participation in the proposed intervention may be viewed as another burdensome obligation. However, one potential strategy to secure offender participation in a reentry program such as RCST might involve working with specifically-assigned probation officers (who could assist the offender in managing his schedule and potentially enhance offender buy-in through expounding the benefits of continued program participation).

As previously mentioned, the ideal RCST program would include tokens of status and inclusion (jackets, business cards, monogrammed day planners, etc.). Another possibility is the bestowal of minimal financial remuneration, gift certificates for offender service team attendance, or even modest stipends as incentives that would function as "reinforcers" (Gendreau, French & Gionet, 2004). Offender buy-in might also be enhanced through affording individual RCST teams a degree of autonomy and personalization (i.e., allowing team member to choose their own "team name," team slogan, mission statement, etc.). It is even envisioned that opportunities for prosocial activities could be expanded to include intra-team barbeques, day trips/excursions, group attendance at sporting and cultural events, etc.

Even with offender buy-in, RCST is not being proposed as an instantaneous solution or "magic bullet" for the challenges and previous failures of offender reentry. RCST is offered as a potential long-term strategy. Certainly it is hoped that offenders participating in RCST would succeed in completing their service projects and in attaining certification. It is also hoped that they would develop more extensive prosocial networks leading to high quality opportunities in work and education, and that they would desist from crime. However, the process to full

restoration and integration is likely to be more naturalistic, unfolding as a by-product of

increasing community involvement, acquisition of prosocial skills, behaviors and attitudes, and

various demonstrations of success that lead to community acceptance. Indeed, Bazemore and

Boba (2007) suggest researchers evaluate the extent to which community service achieves

intermediate goals and outcomes (i.e., whether civic service: provided a context in which the

offender developed socially supportive relationships; fostered a change in the offender's self-

image and effected a change in the public image of the individual; and provided an opportunity

for the offender to increase skills and demonstrate employment readiness, among other

objectives). Thus, the offender's participation on a reintegrative community service team could

be an opportunity to start down a pathway toward positive transformation. As such, RCST is

proposed as an investment in the future.

Conclusion

As reintegration is increasingly recognized as a process involving a reciprocal

relationship between the offender and the community he returns to, this paper builds upon

existing scholarship to develop a community-involved reentry program model. The proposed

RCST intervention may complement youth-oriented CJC initiatives already in place by

providing a model flexible enough to assist both youth and older offenders, as well as individuals

with unique needs and circumstances.   However, the RCST model is volunteer-driven and

community-based; bringing the community more deeply into the reentry process requires

additional study and analysis.

Thus, future research is recommended to evaluate the risks of volunteering with offenders

in a community setting, assessing what safeguards are typically employed and their potential

effectiveness. Research should also be performed to assess the level of volunteer interest across

different social groups and strata to determine if resources levels would be adequate to make these types of projects feasible (either on a small or large-scale basis). Another important consideration includes identifying a process to determine the nature of each project and the appropriate degree of complexity, as well as how to secure project opportunities. These characteristics of projects would affect the degree of time investment required from volunteers, and ideally they should also match the work-related skill sets individual offenders need to develop.

As for reintegration rituals, it has been recommended that these ceremonies involve representatives of the criminal justice system (Maruna 2001). These officials would openly recognize the accomplishments of desisting offenders (thereby according legitimacy to the ritual), potentially transform offenders' views of the criminal justice system, and facilitate public acceptance of offenders. Thus, a community-involved model of reintegration does not isolate itself from the criminal justice system but works collaboratively with other stakeholders. Academia, criminal justice practitioners, social service/reentry providers, seasoned prison volunteers, victims' groups, members of faith communities, retirees and others can harness their respective strengths to increase public safety by supporting offender efforts to "make good," rebuild community trust, and gain community acceptance. Truly, these objectives must be met if offenders are to achieve meaningful reintegration by developing supports and community ties that may reduce or eliminate the appeal of crime and criminal subcultures.

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