

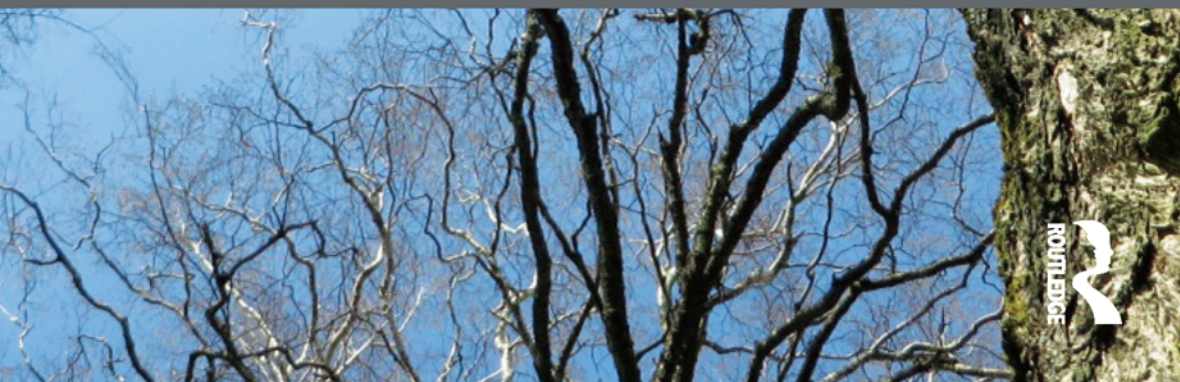


THERAPEUTIC CORRECTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Theory, research and practice

SARAH LEWIS

ISODR INTERNATIONAL
SERIES ON
RESISTANCE
AND REHABILITATION



ROUTLEDGE



“Anyone who has worked with involuntary clients appreciates the importance of the professional relationship, but what does it involve? How are relationships established and sustained and what is to be done when things go wrong? Sarah Lewis has written a wise and insightful book, solidly grounded on theory drawn from a range of disciplines and enlivened by the views of practitioners and users of probation services taken from her own original research. With many well-judged reflections on emotion, power and legitimacy, this is an invaluable contribution to effective and ethical practice.”

*Rob Canton, Professor in Community and Criminal Justice,
De Montfort University*

“This book provides important and illuminating insights into the crucial process of facilitating positive change with individuals through therapeutic correctional relationships. The innovative nature of the research study, together with the breadth and depth of the analysis of the findings, makes this a significant and timely contribution to this area.”

*Jill Annison, Associate Professor in Criminal Justice Studies,
Plymouth University*

“*Therapeutic Correctional Relationships* is a much needed corrective for rehabilitation research. Rather than mysterious talk about offender “treatment,” conjuring doctors in white lab coats calibrating precise dosage of moral medicine, Sarah Lewis explores rehabilitation work for what it really is: human relationships. In doing so, we get a much more realistic and even more optimistic vision of what works and how it works in the complicated business of personal transformation. It is just what the doctor ordered!”

Shadd Maruna, Dean, Rutgers School of Criminal Justice

“Sarah Lewis has captured the essence of the ‘relational revolution’ in corrections with a perfectly pitched blend of scholarly discourse and insightful analysis of both offender and practitioner perspectives. Her qualitative study of the features of the ‘good relationship’ in a correctional context goes much further than others before her and she develops an engaging framework for understanding not just the rhythm and flow of that relationship but the processes that affect it. Importantly, she clarifies that if therapeutic change is to emerge, it will not just fall out of the relationship. It will occur because of the right mixture of skills, qualities and values of practitioners in keeping the relationship on track and repairing ruptures. If you are a correctional professional committed to helping offenders transform their lives, a probation or prison service manager, a volunteer, or even just an interested observer, you need to read this book.”

*Frank J. Porporino, Ph.D., T3 Associates Inc. and International
Association for Correctional and Forensic Psychology, Ottawa, Canada*

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Therapeutic Correctional Relationships

The relationship between offender and criminal justice practitioner has shifted throughout rehabilitative history, whether situated within psychological interventions, prison or probation. This relationship has evolved and adapted over time, but interpersonal processes remain central to offender work. However, little work has critically focused upon the challenging task of developing and sustaining positive relationships with offenders.

This book addresses this gap, providing an in-depth exploration of the processes which underpin correctional relationships within probation. Through an innovative methodology, it examines how practitioners can enhance their practice by understanding how relationships form, deepen and end effectively. For the first time, it draws on the experiences of offenders and practitioners to uncover the darker side to relationships, identifying how they can rupture and break down. From this exploration, it presents alternative ways in which relationships can be repaired and safeguarded within correctional practice. In essence, this book assists practitioners in becoming successful supporters of change.

In an increasingly competitive and politicised climate, this book outlines how political and organisational tensions can impact upon the flow of relationships across the criminal justice system. Uniquely, this book examines how these tensions can be overcome to produce transformative changes. Lewis suggests that therapeutic correctional relationships can thrive within a number of correctional settings and presents the core principles of relational practice and dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships to assist in achieving quality and sustainable practice. This book will appeal to criminological and psychological scholars as well as students studying probation and prison practice, offender rehabilitation and desistance.

Sarah Lewis is Senior Lecturer in Criminal Psychology at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, University of Portsmouth.

International Series of Desistance and Rehabilitation

The *International Series on Desistance and Rehabilitation* aims to provide a forum for critical debate and discussion surrounding the topics of why people stop offending and how they can be more effectively reintegrated into the communities and societies from which they came. The books published in the series will be international in outlook, but tightly focused on the unique, specific contexts and processes associated with desistance, rehabilitation and reform. Each book in the series will stand as an attempt to advance knowledge or theorising about the topics at hand, rather than being merely an extended report of specific a research project. As such, it is anticipated that some of the books included in the series will be primarily theoretical, whilst others will be more tightly focused on the sorts of initiatives which could be employed to encourage desistance. It is not our intention that books published in the series be limited to the contemporary period, as good studies of desistance, rehabilitation and reform undertaken by historians of crime are also welcome. In terms of authorship, we would welcome excellent PhD work, as well as contributions from more established academics and research teams. Most books are expected to be monographs, but edited collections are also encouraged.

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9. Therapeutic Correctional Relationships

Theory, research and practice

Sarah Lewis

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Theory, research and practice

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To my husband, Allister

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Foreword

Back in the summer of 2014, I had the pleasure of examining the PhD thesis on which this book is based. Examining PhDs is one of my favourite tasks – at least when the thesis is a good one – and this one was certainly that. Like the thesis is an extended examination of one of the most important and yet strangely neglected aspects of probation work: the supervisory relationship.

This is not (primarily) a book about supervision techniques or tools or methods or programmes; rather, it is a book about the relationships that frame and underpin any and all attempts to support change. It is also a little different from the important work of others (like Peter Raynor, Chris Trotter and their colleagues) on supervision *skills*, but it does complement and enrich their insights.

Although historically the ‘casework relationship’ has been much discussed in the probation literature, I think these discussions have been too rarely connected with related literature from cognate areas of ‘therapeutic’ (or change-supporting) practice in other fields. It has also lacked a deep engagement with the views, experiences and interpretations of probationers and practitioners themselves. By attending carefully to both of these neglected sources, Sarah Lewis makes a genuinely important contribution to scholarship in this area – one that has significant implications both for theory and research and for policy and practice.

The chapters that describe and analyse Lewis’s findings are fascinating in offering an analysis of relational dynamics in supervision which is extremely thoughtful and highly persuasive throughout, making important links made to literature on legitimacy, trust and moral performance in correctional settings.

I suspect that readers in England and Wales may read the book’s conclusion with a mixture of hope and fear. Their hope may be that Lewis has succeeded in capturing and evidencing the practical value of the humanistic approach that are at the heart of probation work (at its best). Their fear may be that the commodification and commercialisation of ‘therapeutic correctional relationships’ will undermine or even destroy them. But irrespective of whether hope or fear triumphs, practitioners and leaders in both the community rehabilitation companies and in the National Probation Service, and

policymakers, would do well to read this book and to ponder its recommendations. If they want probation to ‘work’, they need this book’s insights into the relationships on which it depends.

Fergus McNeill

Acknowledgement

The significance of this book for me is hard to express in words and it is equally difficult to truly represent my thanks to those that have helped me throughout this process. I can honestly say that I have loved every moment of this work, as I have gained real satisfaction working alongside my doctoral cohort, my supervisors, the participants and my colleagues, old and new. This project would not have developed as it did, without a number of people that need a particular mention.

Thank you to the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies for their support. I feel proud to work for an organisation that invests in its early-career academics. This extends specifically to Dr Phil Clements, who supported me during the Professional Doctorate and within my academic work since, providing opportunities for growth, encouragement and advice.

I would like to thank all of the practitioners and offenders that spent time with me, talking about their experiences and sharing with me their stories. This also extends to those offenders that I have worked with during my time working for probation. They have taught me a great deal about relationships and myself as a person. A special mention goes to Michael; the strength of our relationship has meant that this project was *real* and personally important to us both. I hope I have done it justice and it makes the difference that *we* both hoped it would.

I would like to thank and acknowledge my two supervisors and my mentor: Mike Nash, Dennis Gough and Francis Pakes. Mike – thank you for your time, patience and honesty. Your advice and guidance has meant a great deal and I have learned so much from the questions you have posed and your experiences, stories and knowledge. Dennis – your reassurance and knowledge have played a significant part in this project as your contributions were instrumental to the design, analysis and final dissemination. Francis – thank you for your time, interest and investment.

A further thanks goes to my two external examiners: Professor Fergus McNeill and Dr Jill Annison. Their support, respect and knowledge has shaped this piece from a thesis to a book and their insights were helpful and appreciated. A word of thanks also goes to my anonymous reviewer, for their constructive words and balanced review.

Last but by no means least, I would like to thank my family. I would like to thank my husband, Allister Lewis; for giving me time to study, without any question; for supporting me throughout the process and for spending time talking about my ideas and reading my work. Finally, a huge thanks goes to my parents, who always believed in me and supported my goals, regardless of their worries. Thank you Dad, for every draft you have read without complaint.

All these people had a role in the creation in this piece – it was co-constructed and I value this greatly.

List of abbreviations

MoJ	Ministry of Justice
SEEDS	Skills for Effective Engagement and Development
TCR	therapeutic correctional relationship
TF	therapeutic frame

1 Introduction

The position of the relationship between offender and criminal justice practitioner has shifted throughout rehabilitative history, whether that relationship is situated within psychological interventions, prison or probation. This relationship and the values that underpin it, have evolved and adapted over time depending upon the context in which they are embedded, and yet interpersonal processes still remain a significant aspect of rehabilitative work today (Burnett, 2004). Such relationships can be understood in numerous ways and this has consequentially meant that the effective elements of relational work have never been fully uncovered or appreciated (Burnett, 2004). The potential to form more therapeutic relationships that promote behavioural change has many tensions within a correctional context and this work aims to explore these challenges and conclude that *therapeutic* correctional relationships are possible, in spite of these issues. Relationships are central throughout criminal justice and from the moment a criminal offence is committed, relationships are severed between offender, victims and communities. The process of repairing and safeguarding relationships is of great significance, not only for the offender themselves, but on broader levels, across criminal justice agencies and within communities. This book aims to examine relationships that promote change, by discussing relationships vertically at different levels of the criminal justice system and horizontally, across criminological and psychological disciplines. It will draw on the findings of my doctoral research to critically examine the micro-processes of relationships and address what implications this new knowledge might have for frontline practice and policy.

While it is generally accepted that relationships can be a positive vehicle within the change process, little work has concentrated on the specific mechanisms that underlie relationships and the darker side to them. It can sometimes be assumed that once a practitioner and offender form a 'good' relationship, this continues throughout their work together and yet, this research highlights that relationships ebb and flow over time and an insight into this process can prove to be both valuable and useful.

It is important first to distinguish between correctional relationships and therapeutic correctional relationships. I contend that correctional relationships

2 Introduction

account for *all* relationships that exist between an offender and criminal justice practitioner, irrespective of quality. A therapeutic correctional relationship, however, is associated with a correctional relationship that nurtures growth and positive change and is defined as a collaborative relationship that is founded upon therapeutic qualities, such as mutual respect, genuineness, empathy, acceptance and positive regard (Rogers, 1967; Miller and Rollnick, 2002). Research in this area is relatively silent upon how criminal justice practitioners can effectively support change and Matthews and Hubbard (2007) question whether some practitioners believe this to be an aspect of their role. The term 'correctional' in itself suggests that there are elements of an individual that need 'fixing' or 'mending' and yet this term is used more to represent the context in which such relationships sit. Further, it suggests that within the context of correctional rehabilitation, relationships and the way in which we practise them can provide opportunities for new learning to support the offender in repairing ruptured relationships and build more positive relationships, which may assist them in their journey away from crime. From Matthews and Hubbard's (2007) work and my own, it is argued that therapeutic correctional relationships can be formed with offenders and that there are numerous opportunities within the criminal justice system where such relationships can operate and flourish.

While it is acknowledged that several factors support processes of desistance, this work focuses upon relational issues characteristic to a correctional setting. My research was carried out within a probation setting and it is hoped that comparisons can be drawn from this context, into other domains within criminal justice. I will argue that therapeutic correctional relationships can aid the practitioner in supporting the processes of desistance and contribute to aspects of risk assessment. These aspects of practice may be relevant to prison work, probation work and more recently the work of community rehabilitation companies within England and Wales, since the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda. International perspectives will also be considered to provide a commentary on some of the contemporary issues that exist within relational work.

While a focus of this book is a consideration of the micro-processes of therapeutic correctional relationships, relational practice, or the lack of it, will be discussed on broader levels, seeking out alternative ways of practice from the bottom up. This book is therefore aimed at frontline practitioners, students studying penology, psychology or criminology as well as policy-makers and organisational leaders. The findings from this project were formulated on the position of embracing offender engagement throughout the process of the research, in order to promote the ideas of personalisation within criminal justice and relational justice. In light of the findings from the research, it will present the *core principles of relational practice* and discuss future directions within theory, training and practice.

Introducing the research

The aim of my doctoral study was to gain a greater understanding of relationships that promote change and more specifically the therapeutic correctional relationship between the probation practitioner and offender.

In light of this aim, the objectives of my doctoral work were:

- 1 To critically consider what is understood by a therapeutic correctional relationship.
- 2 To examine the relational narrative or journey between practitioner and offender, specifically considering what factors contribute to and safeguard a therapeutic correctional relationship.
- 3 To understand and explore interpersonal ruptures within a correctional context.
- 4 To embrace the offender voice throughout all facets of the research, including the design, participation and analysis.
- 5 To consider ways in which relational work can be developed within correctional practice in the future.

Research questions

In pursuance of the objectives above, the following research questions were formulated to define the scope of this project:

Table 1.1 Themes and corresponding research questions of the doctoral project

<i>Themes</i>	<i>Research questions</i>
<i>Understanding therapeutic correctional relationships</i>	How are therapeutic correctional relationships understood within probation practice, by offenders?
<i>Exploring the relational narrative</i>	How do offenders and practitioners describe the relational narrative? What elements of good practice can maximise the likelihood of relationship success, from the perspective of the offenders and the practitioner?
<i>Correctional ruptures</i>	How do offenders and practitioners describe ruptures within probation practice? How might ruptures be successfully repaired within probation practice, from the perspective of the offender and practitioner?

The significance of relationships

With the wealth of academic pursuits relating to relationships within the criminal justice system (e.g. Rex, 1999; Burnett and McNeill, 2005; Dowden and Andrews, 2004; King, 2013; Liebling, Price and Shefer, 2011), it is hard to dispute the significance of relationships within correctional practice. Not only does a 'positive' relationship play a crucial role in processes of desistance, through the nurturing of pro-social narratives (Burnett and McNeill, 2005), it may also have broader implications (King, 2013). For example, Ansbro (2008) highlighted the importance of creating a secure base for an offender within a supervisory context, which may increase the likelihood of positive change through the development of a healthy bond between practitioner and offender. McNeill and Robinson (2013) stated that such a bond can act as a bridge to compliance through the development of trust and respect, as well as noting that a sense of commitment is important to create legitimacy for an offender (Robinson, 2005). While a 'positive' relationship may support processes of desistance, it may also sustain such processes. Appleton (2010) concluded from her work that a 'good' correctional relationship can be vital within the *maintenance* of desistance and described how a 'positive' relationship can also increase offender motivation. In addition to this, Ryals (2011) acknowledged that a therapeutic relationship can contribute to offender self-transformation and positivity, as well as nurturing feelings of empowerment. These insights suggest that *certain* correctional relationships may have significance within different aspects of correctional work, and may contribute to rehabilitative aims. The findings from this thesis reaffirmed the importance of constructing a more therapeutic stance within correctional work, to meet the functions of contemporary correctional practice, focusing specifically upon probation, prison and community rehabilitation companies.

On a broader scale, the significance of relationships has consistently featured in discussions relating to rehabilitation and the ideas of personal growth. They seem to take on different functions, depending upon the context in which they are situated, and yet Weaver (2014: 11) importantly points out that 'relationships of different forms are often the vehicle through which newly forming identities (such as worker, partner or parent) are realized, solidified and sustained'. Weaver (2014) goes on to say that adopting a change-focused approach, by examining the processes that underpin change, would benefit from gaining a greater understanding into different types of relationships. The literature on relationships would suggest that personal, intimate and professional relationships play a role in assisting an individual to desist from crime, and yet this can be broadened out further when considering more global relationships within criminal justice institutions and the State.

Probation is currently undergoing a significant challenge due to the changes made by the last coalition government to privatise the majority of probation work, thus leaving probation only accountable for those who are deemed 'high' risk (MoJ, 2013). Under the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda, it is

a priority to focus on those things that ‘add value’ to rehabilitative work (MoJ, 2013). At this transitional time, practitioners need to be encouraged to value their relationships, recognise the importance of them within the context of their work and challenge the status quo that may undermine this. I argue that in order to fully address the risk of an offender and play a role in their desistance, a therapeutic correctional relationship can contribute to, what Gough (2012) described as the coupling of risk and rehabilitation within contemporary corrections. Through a greater analysis of therapeutic correctional relationships, practitioners do not have to limit their knowledge by thinking about ‘what works’ in a general sense, but creatively construct *individualised* relational theories with each offender. This awareness may support the practitioner in developing and safeguarding their relationships. Matthews and Hubbard (2007: 109) acknowledged that the majority of correctional research and training is dedicated to the evaluation of specific techniques, such as cognitive behavioural programmes, and relationships or ‘softer technologies ... take a back seat’. This research therefore aims to place relationships back onto the agenda and promote aspects of the relational revolution, which are discussed by Weaver (2012). This brings significant challenges as a result of the movement away from ‘relational rehabilitation’ (Raynor and Robinson, 2005), though it is argued that relational work has the potential to be used to manage risk and promote positive change in an individual who offends.

The objectives of my research were constructed in response to numerous problems that have been identified from my own professional experience. While a ‘positive’ relationship has been highlighted as a ‘positive vehicle for change’ within probation (Copsey, 2011: 1), little work has been carried out that explores what is meant by this ‘relationship’ (Gelso, 2014). As highlighted by Ross, Polaschek and Ward (2008), the ‘practice’ of a correctional practitioner and the way in which they understand and act are dependent upon numerous variables. This may include the practitioner’s attitudes to both offender and offence, the values the practitioner holds (Day and Ward, 2010) or what relational schemata and attachments have been constructed (Black *et al.*, 2005). Relational schemata can be defined as ‘working models’ that individuals construct from their most important relationships (Baldwin *et al.*, 1993) whereas attachments focus upon the extent to which a child and its care-giver create a bond which is deemed safe and secure (Bowlby, 1958).

As practitioners have constructed their own relational representations and act according to these, a plurality of practice emerges that makes it difficult to qualify what a relationship is. Kokotovic and Tracey (1990) called for greater clarity of the relationship, and this is later acknowledged by Appleton (2010), who stated that while the significance of a correctional relationship has been identified, there is a lack of sound knowledge about what makes a ‘good’ or ‘right’ relationship. This research aimed to address these issues by exploring *how* offenders construct the very relationships that they recognise to be significant and how such relationships flow and develop over time.

Relational knowledge also lacks specific attention to the micro-processes that underpin therapeutic correctional relationships. McNeill (2004) emphasised the need for a greater theoretical debate around relational construction within corrections. Maruna (2000: 12) claimed that both the social context and individual create; ‘thousands of different micro-mechanisms of change’, that have been largely ignored within rehabilitative practice. From my own observations as a probation practitioner within prison and the community, there appears to be numerous assumptions made around relationships in correctional practice. First, practitioners successfully recognise the effective elements within their relationships with an offender. Second, practitioners are aware when a relationship is not working, reflect upon this accurately and act appropriately, when a relationship is challenging. Furthermore, practitioners are aware of the influence they are having on an offender and believe a therapeutic correctional relationship is important and necessary. While some practitioners competently build therapeutic correctional relationships with offenders, this is not a standard expectation of current probation or prison practice and an examination of exploring the benefits of such a notion, are worth further investment. Kozar and Day (2012) stated that relating ‘well’ or ‘poorly’ are words that do not articulate relational experiences fully. Therefore, research dedicated to an in-depth analysis of relationships is called for and it is proposed that this research initiated this short fall.

The significance and contribution of this research

Drawing upon the significance of this research and its contribution to existing knowledge, three main arguments are proposed. This work will: increase the current knowledge specific to therapeutic correctional relationships; provide new insights that will inform quality practice within correctional settings; and promote the deeper involvement of the offender within relational research.

This research builds upon current knowledge within the relational correctional field, addressing important gaps within the literature and providing a greater insight into the micro-processes which underpin therapeutic correctional relationships. Lamet *et al.* (2013) called for a greater analysis into the factors that may contribute to supervision failure, as they highlighted this as a significant predictor of recidivism. Additionally, Horvarth (2005) stated that relational research can assist in gaining a greater understanding of the micro-processes that operate within relationships. Horvath and Luborsky (1993) specifically highlighted that more fine-grained studies can lead to a greater understanding around relationship formation and enlighten us, with regard to repairing relationships. While work has begun in this area within psychotherapy, little work has currently been undertaken within settings linked to offender rehabilitation. Safran and Muran (1996) discussed how research into relational ruptures (a temporary tear in the therapeutic relationship) could allow for a development of specific principles, which may inform a practitioner of how to repair relationships. Such an insight is believed to not only enlighten correctional practice, but empower practitioners with the notion that ruptures are normal and can lead

to opportunities for personal growth. For the practitioner, this may promote the notion of developing therapeutic correctional relationships and for the offender; it may assist them in overcoming difficulties within their relationships, learning lessons that are transferable to those very relationships that may promote desistance and open doors to alternative opportunities (Farrall, 2002).

Within this project, I adopted an action research stance that values the acquisition of new knowledge and practical application of knowledge within practice. It is personally important to me that this work generates further debate and impacts upon frontline practitioners, to facilitate good practice in the future. While this research is focused upon probation practice, it is argued that these findings may stimulate debate within broader aspects of criminal justice, providing some recommendations that will support service development. For example, Raynor and Robinson (2005) explained how 'relational rehabilitation' may embrace broader aspects of punishment, attending to relationships with families and the community. This would suggest that knowledge on relationships may be far-reaching and provide valuable insight into a wide range of relational experiences. This is reinforced by alternative philosophies of punishment that focus on mending broken bonds between the offender, the victim and community. Restorative justice is constructed on the principle of relational repair and challenges the ever-increasing focus upon retributive methods of punishment. Braithwaite (1999: 1737) acknowledges that retributive punishment has been given a more central role within criminal justice with 'disastrous consequences', while restorative justice is an alternative that has been identified as transformational and more conducive to a forgiving society. This indicates that relational-focused work is not limited to frontline practice, but can span across systems and feature within organisational structures. By doing this, I propose that relational work and change-focused practice may be nurtured in a climate that supports growth, rather than a toxic environment which increases the likely of ruptures and uses punishment as a weapon of the weak (Braithwaite, 1999).

To address relational-focused work more readily within criminal justice, a comprehensive framework that guides the practitioner through some insights into the development, maintenance and endings of therapeutic correctional relationships is believed to be missing within current correctional literature. Safeguarding the relationship once developed and providing knowledge around relational promoters may lead to further enlightenment on relational issues. Additionally, considering variables that may repair relationships are believed to be vital, not only on a micro level (between offender and practitioner), but throughout correctional levels and systems.

Adopting a participatory approach: listening to the offender voice in relational research

As Appleton (2010: 75) highlighted, contemporary notions of punishment have altered the role of the 'offender' from an individual that needs

reforming, to 'the individual as penal subject'. The principles associated with this have encouraged the silencing of the offender on a humanistic level and promoted the utilisation of homogeneous categories that create greater distance between 'them and us'. I argue that the process of 'othering' demotes the voice of the offender and may be one of the reasons why participatory work has not flourished within criminology. Within this doctoral research, a participatory approach was embraced in order to promote offender-centred research, by not only listening to the offender's voice through their participation, but embracing their skills and experience throughout each stage of the research from design to analysis. The offender was not seen as a subject, but took on the role as consultant, participant and analyst. As Barry (2007: 415) highlighted in her work, 'offenders and ex-offenders have a wealth of knowledge and expertise', and should be viewed as expert witnesses. While in penal modernism, the expert role was assigned to the professional (O'Malley, 2009), this research promoted the opposite; the 'expert' was 'the subject'. The rationale for this approach was largely formulated upon personal values that will be discussed throughout this work, as well as the notion that, in order to gain a rich insight into therapeutic correctional relationships, the offender perspective needs to be heard.

Listening to the offender voice has occurred relatively recently within academia and practice. Since the theoretical developments of critical criminology in the 1970s, criminology has extended its theoretical perspectives and this, as Ferrell (1998) stated, opened up the debate by accepting a number of diverse discourses, including that of convict criminology. Within convict criminology, the offenders' 'insider perspective' (Ross and Richards, 2003) began to be used in numerous ways to inform knowledge around prisons and has considered offenders as individuals who are in a privileged position, due to their direct experiences of penal practice. Even though the offender voice has begun to be addressed theoretically, its practical application to research and practice remains somewhat limited. As Dupont (2008) highlighted, a participatory approach has been slow to develop within the field of criminology, with few exceptions. Dupont (2008) argued that the power differential is a characteristic problem within criminological research, particularly as the 'playing field' is not even between the researcher and researched. My research pursued new territory and did not rely on the outsider-researcher to observe relationships from a distance. Appleton (2010) highlighted that in order to establish a 'positive' relationship with those that offend, it is vital for them to feel they are being listened to. In response to this, I wanted to adopt a participatory approach to demonstrate the benefits of listening to the offender voice. If researchers successfully coordinate the differing viewpoints of prisoners within research, Bosworth (2005) proposes that it provides a more convincing and robust critique of the criminal justice. Striving to paint an accurate picture of the offender's thoughts and beliefs were essential to the success and credibility of this project, ensuring that their views were accurately interpreted and reported within this thesis. Offenders have therefore

actively engaged in the scope, design, participation and analysis of this project. They have challenged, shared and critiqued its development throughout each phase. This has led to a project that initially held uncertainty due to some relinquished control, but has consequentially provided new insights that have proved invaluable to me and, it is hoped, to my readers also. In respect to the topic of this doctoral project, it seemed both relevant and appropriate to adopt such a position and I believe this has led me to a rich vein of data, which is of great value. It is hoped that this research will encourage other researchers to work collaboratively with offenders to promote the offender voice, actively encouraging researchers to consider accessible ways to approach research in the future, to encourage power equality, when working with those that are marginalised.

The researcher's journey: a reflective account

Mercer (2007) highlighted that the first step for any researcher is to reflect upon their identities and status within their research, considering its effect. In order to fully contextualise this project, the following reflexive account outlines my professional journey and the reasons I chose to research therapeutic correctional relationships and my movement from insider to outsider and my arrival at 'the space between' (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009: 100).

I have always valued the importance of supporting individuals and trying to understand their experiences. These values led me to a number of job opportunities within psychiatric care and residential environments. It was here where I worked with individuals who had offended and I gained great satisfaction in listening and assisting them to develop their life skills. At the age of 24, I started working for a local probation trust as a probation service officer, within a remand prison. With strong values relating to the welfare and care of others, prison challenged these values. I was presented with an anxious environment, especially when I witnessed some prison staff abusing their position by working against prisoners, instead of with them. This experience prompted an interest in therapeutic correctional relationships that developed my postgraduate study of correctional relationships with young women offenders at a London prison. During my master's degree, an opportunity to work in a more therapeutic role in the community (programme facilitator), allowed me to utilise my passion for psychology and people. During my years as a programme facilitator (where I delivered cognitive-behavioural programmes), I became increasingly interested in the dynamics of therapeutic correctional relationships and was recognised by colleagues as a motivational worker, being allocated some of the 'hard to reach' individuals that entered programmes. I found this role both rewarding and challenging and always aimed to find new ways of reaching individuals that were difficult to engage. In 2010, I began my doctoral studies, during which I would regularly discuss with offenders their frustrations relating to their relationships with probation and prison practitioners. Upon reflection, this motivated me to consider the

importance of therapeutic correctional relationships, as it was something that I believed could be both powerful and transformational. As I began to seek the views of offenders, I came to realise that their 'expert' opinions complemented my own understanding.

As part of the doctoral process, I carried out a pilot study to explore some initial ideas around my doctoral interests. From my experiences as a programme facilitator, I wanted to collect my data in an engaging way that was responsive to the offenders I was interviewing. An offender agreed to assist me in developing a visual technique of plotting offenders' narratives, using mind maps to explore significant therapeutic correctional relationships in greater detail. Shortly after this time, I secured a grant to participate in what became my second exploration into therapeutic correctional relationships. I developed the visuals in a slightly different way, based upon offender feedback and wanted to consider the possibilities of involving offenders in the analysis of the data. The learning from this experience significantly shaped my doctoral work with respect to methodology, approach and design, which I address in the next chapter. It allowed me to further appreciate the offender voice and witness the benefits of participatory research.

The changes which operate *within* therapeutic correctional relationships became a new interest, as I explored the literature around psychotherapy and continued to consult with offenders informally. To gain further insight, I asked an offender to discuss the stages of our therapeutic correctional relationship. We were able to discuss our experiences freely and the session became emotional and enlightening. It clearly demonstrated to me how relationships ebb and flow during their existence and can be encouraged or shaken, in numerous ways. From revisiting the literature within psychotherapy, I found from my personal experiences as a practitioner, ruptures were present within my relationships. This stimulated a desire to explore how ruptures manifest in correctional practice and how practitioners can recover from relational difficulties. I discovered from my pilot study that as practitioners spent longer in their role, the level of belief in change declined (Lewis, 2014c) and I wanted to explore this further, to consider ways this could be avoided.

In September 2012, I successfully secured a role as Senior Lecturer at the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies, teaching probation practitioners the academic element of their Probation Qualification Framework. This was a challenging time for me, as I had moved away from frontline work with colleagues who were highly supportive. Despite this, I felt my doctoral studies would complement my teaching and provide me with opportunities to make a bigger impact. This became increasingly apparent over the six months that followed, as I was given numerous opportunities to disseminate my findings from the Sir Graham Smith Award within my local probation trust, the Home Office, senior management on the Probation Qualification Framework and later within conferences. I felt that as an academic, my work carried greater legitimacy and was more readily received, and, as a consequence, I felt I had a voice.

The opportunities which have emerged throughout my professional career have led to new insights into how relationships can be studied. The more I include offenders within my work, the more insight I gain into how relationships are conceptualised by those that offend. I learned about therapeutic correctional relationships *through* my relationships. I became increasingly convinced that when studying relationships, we need to be more informed; by evidence-based relational research; by those that experience therapeutic correctional relationships; and by disciplines which prioritise such relationships within their work. It is within this context that my current research sits.

Book structure

The structure of this book was adopted following the recommendations of Elliot, Fischer and Rennie (1999), who presented seven standards of high-quality qualitative research. The first standard relates to the intended purpose of the research, which will be outlined within this introduction and Chapter 2, which contextualises this project. Subsequently, in Chapter 3 the second standard presents a robust argument that provides a rationale for adopting an Action Research approach and the methods utilised within this project. It is here where my participatory and visual methodology will be discussed, in response to previous research. The use of focus groups and interviews will also be justified, using the literature to highlight their appropriateness with respect to the research aims. The third standard relates to upholding the respect of the participants and it is argued that this is evident through the participatory paradigm, which aims to listen to the marginalised voices of offenders. The inclusion of participants and details of the methods used within this project fulfils the fourth standard by providing a detailed specification of the methods utilised, which will also feature within Chapter 3. In response to the fifth standard, the process of participatory data analysis will be elaborated upon and its relevance will appear within three thematic chapters; introducing the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships (Chapter 4), the relational narrative (Chapter 5); and relationships and ruptures: safeguarding the therapeutic correctional relationship (Chapter 6). Within these chapters, theoretical perspectives will be presented to introduce each theme and then the primary data will be discussed and evaluated in light of the academic literature.

The sixth standard outlined by Elliott *et al.* (1999) focuses upon the clarity of presentation within a project and this has been achieved through thematic discussions of the results, which are aligned with each set of research questions presented in this introduction, as recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). Chapter 7 will then discuss future direction within relational theory, training and practice and broaden the debate by focusing upon macro-relationships and relational justice.

The following chapter aims to review the relational literature to fully contextualise and situate this doctoral project and shed greater light on the research objectives.

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2 Retracing relationships in criminal justice

Correctional relationships can be traced throughout probation history, and reflecting upon historical developments is deemed essential before addressing how therapeutic correctional relationships can develop in the future. To contextualise the research project, this chapter will outline the contribution relational work has made within probation and rehabilitation more broadly, considering how the relationship between practitioner and offender has evolved over time. It will discuss the current climate and contemporary issues relevant to relational work including the privatisation of probation, the growing commercialisation of relationships and important political developments (and tensions) relating to the rehabilitation of offenders. This will be situated within a broader position to consider how a more fluid position is emerging in light of neo-liberal developments, which have contributed to a shifting of relationships once more, considering how broader climates have influenced relational processes.

Relationships have featured throughout probation practice and remained central to front-line practice, in spite of socio-economic and political influence (Burke and Collett, 2011; Worrall and Mawby, 2014). Probation officers and practitioners have been bombarded with numerous demands through the politicisation of correctional practice since the early 1990s, and as a response to this, probation relationships have adapted. While Canton (2011) suggests that the relationship has been lost at points within probation history, I would argue that it has been used to carry out the changing functions of probation over time. This chapter will therefore retrace the correctional relationship and argue that relationships have consistently featured within probation practice (and more broadly), though their visibility and function has changed.

The primary function of probation at its establishment in the late nineteenth century was rooted in Christianity and the work of Police Court missionaries, which aimed to save souls by divine grace (Canton, 2011). In 1907, the Probation Act declared that probation officers should 'advise, assist and befriend' offenders and rejected any responsibilities to punish (Goodman, 2003). While the caseworker relationship, and its influence, was central to probation at this time, the emergence of modern criminology encouraged the notion of individualisation and 'correcting' the wrongdoer (Garland and Sparks, 2000). Dietrich (1979) outlined that the responsibilities of the

practitioner broadened to engulf more rehabilitative processes, whereupon officers were expected to be change agents. The purpose of this was to address offender behaviour and motivation through a person-centred approach, associated with Rogerian thinking (Rogers, 1967). It was noted by Dietrich (1979: 17) that therapeutic advice was at times questionable, simplistic and variable between practitioners, reflecting an 'anything goes' approach. By the late 1970s, Davies (1969) referred to the casework relationship as: 'the probation officer's main instrument', and yet Vennard and Hedderman (1998) later criticised casework to be unstructured, loose and overly didactic. Probation became more scientifically focused during this time and a treatment model dominated practice, through more psychological techniques, rather than understanding personal character (Canton, 2011). While evidence against the traditional casework model was not sufficiently compelling, Burnett (2004) recognised that there was a variance in quality and a lack of standardisation. However, Burnett (2004) added that at its best, traditional casework held some effective ingredients, which were never fully uncovered, due to an overgeneralised rejection of relationships politically.

'Advise, assist and befriend' to 'confront, challenge and control'

Probation experienced a crisis in the 1970s, as it questioned its role in relation to punishment and offender reformation. With the collapse of the rehabilitative ideal, probation became an alternative to custody that later embarked upon a more punishment-focused role within the community (Raynor and Vanstone, 2007). Recognising the difficulties associated with casework, Bottoms and McWilliams (1979) presented a new paradigm for practice that redressed the traditional core values of probation, embracing a collaborative stance that focused on help and maximising the choice for the offender (McNeill, 2006). This non-treatment paradigm rejected the idea of offenders as objects and an officer-centred approach, which was associated with correctional treatment during modernity (Bottoms and McWilliams, 1979).

In the 1990s, a revision of the non-treatment paradigm occurred under Raynor and Vanstone's work (1994), who criticised this approach, as it uncoupled aspects of welfarism and crime reduction. Through its revision, practice moved to a greater focus on reducing reoffending through the notions of helping the offender with issues that contributed to offending behaviour specifically. Robinson (2005) suggested that the movement from caseworker to case manager was initiated by the Green Paper, Punishment, Custody and the Community in 1988 that inferred that probation supervision was distributed among 'service providers' (Home Office, 1988), an initiative that attempted to relieve practitioners of their traditional roles (Drakeford, 1993). However, there was a reluctance to use partnership resources and Burnett (1996) highlighted that relational work was still of great value to practitioners, in spite of the political focus on punishment. With the political drive to get 'tough on crime', new hope emerged through the establishment of the What Works

agenda in the 1990s that declared that under evidence-based practice, rehabilitative work could be of value under certain conditions. The revival of rehabilitation through evidence-based work shifted the focus away from the individualised approach of the past, to a more standardised and mechanical framework. With the introduction of National Standards in 1992, probation were pressurised to demonstrate more rigorous standards, as well as present a service that was value for money (Eadie, 2000). At this time, probation officers were required to adopt new skills within assessment and management, which had several repercussions, including lower job satisfaction, deskilling practitioners (Partridge, 2004) and a decline in practice virtues (McNeill, 2006). In 1998, the Home Office (1998: 7) called for probation to adopt a role that focused upon 'confront, challenge and change'; confronting offending behaviour, challenging the offender to take responsibility for their actions and facilitating change. The rise of managerialism in the early twenty-first century and political shift from care to control considerably altered the role of the probation officer and how relationships were configured. As a result of this, the emphasis on relationships shifted onto skills relevant to sequencing and prioritising requirements (Underdown, 1998). Following the What Works initiative, the focus turned to risk, need and responsivity (Bonta and Andrews, 2007) in light of evidence-based practice. This model highlighted the importance of being responsive to the needs and styles of the offender and yet, the role of relational work was not fully acknowledged to be a tool to facilitate such intentions. McGuire and Priestley (1995) presented six principles of effective practice that were designed to develop effective supervision from programme evaluation. These relational aspects of practice included the need for empathy, genuineness and the establishment of positive relationships, which were person centred and collaborative. While these aspects featured within the principles of effective practice, the visibility of relationships seemed to be clouded by the political drive towards risk management. As probation took on roles relating to risk management as well as rehabilitation, the practitioner was expected to take on two roles, that were regularly in conflict with one another, with little guidance and support in dealing with this.

Feeley and Simon (1994) highlighted that this movement towards managerialism contributed to a new discourse (the new penology) that presented alternative priorities for probation, which were focused upon risk and classification. Appleton (2010) claimed that by adopting the ideas associated with the new penology, probation identity was aligned to the rapid changes that occurred in late modernity. Garland (1997) argued that this focus upon social control resulted in an abandonment of a social work identity and was in conflict with the traditional values associated with probation. Under the new penology, the debate between retributive and rehabilitative practice was somewhat replaced with the notion that the central function of probation was to manage offenders (Feeley and Simon, 1992). With respect to rehabilitative work, it was justified as a way to 'rescue' future victims, rather than the offender (Garland, 1997: 6).

Relationships and visibility: gone but not forgotten

In 2006, the Offender Management Model (NOMS, 2006) outlined the importance of relationship building, but, at the same time, implied a more formalised approach through the adoption of a new discourse, whereupon offenders were treated as ‘objects’, on which work was ‘done’. With the political shift towards ‘confront, challenge and change’ (Home Office, 1998: 7), Barry (2000) argued that relationships were being forgotten and urged practitioners to listen effectively to those that they worked with. However, as demands increased and staffing levels reduced, due to financial constraints, it became increasingly challenging to dedicate sufficient time to relationships. Instead, practitioners spent a significant amount of time administering tasks which distracted them from face-to-face work, and Gregory (2010) highlighted that increased caseloads created a barrier for working relationships to develop effectively. As proposed by Annison *et al.* (2008), a tension with the proposition of managing an offender and engaging with them, emerged. O’Malley (2009) highlighted that techniques associated with risk management strategies were technical and dispassionate and the humanistic values became contentious and challenging. However, it may not be the case that a humanistic approach or welfaristic discourse failed to operate within a remit of public protection. Fitzgibbon (2007) highlighted that relationships were transformed when practitioners were given the task of protecting the public by managing risk, as offender need became the target of transformative therapeutic interventions, aimed at behavioural change (O’Malley, 2002). While a crime reduction role of probation was seen as credible and supported politically (Underdown, 1998), Fitzgibbon (2007) highlighted that effective implementation of risk assessment was largely dependent upon traditional casework skills. Additionally, Vanstone (2004) acknowledged that the success of probation practice was not only dependent on the principles of effective practice, but also the ability to engage the offender and develop trust. Vanstone (2004) found that risk assessments undertaken by practitioners, who had built good correctional relationships with offenders, were better quality. This indicated that while relationships were removed from political discourse, they were still utilised as an instrument to gain a greater understanding of the offender. With criticisms of casework that focused upon a lack of standardisation, the What Works agenda (which was formulated on the premise that under certain conditions, rehabilitation was possible) was criticised for being rigid and monolithic, diverting attention away from alternative legitimate goals associated with supervision (Leach, 2000). Underdown (1998) noted that correctional relationships needed to complement the work of other services, acting as a consistent player within the offender’s pursuit of rehabilitation. Relationships were therefore used to serve multiple functions and aimed to provide case management consistency to address high drop-out rates that were characteristic of cognitive behavioural programmes (Turner, 2006).

Relationships and desistance: an injection of hope

At the turn of the millennium, theoretical advancement relating to desistance (Maruna, 2000) and the good lives model (Ward, 2002) contributed to further adaptations of the correctional relationship. As Maruna (2012) highlighted, ‘the best and most rigorous of the scientific What Works research consistently shows that the more motivated, passionate staff typically produce the best results’. This indicated that within an evidence-based climate, the importance of working relationships still held significance alongside opportunities to build relationships with significant others or secure employment (Farrall, 2002), and were increasingly favoured in light of academic research (Rex, 1999; Robinson and Dignan, 2004; Burnett and McNeill, 2005). The importance of correctional relationships, characterised by mutual respect, loyalty and commitment, were deemed as one of the many ways in which desistance could be supported, through the development of an offender’s strengths (McNeill, 2009). Clark *et al.* (2006: 38) promoted the notion of the probation officer becoming a more active player to ‘get back in the game’ of behavioural change, suggesting in earlier work (Clark, 2005), the need for therapeutic abilities to be considered at the point of recruitment, similar to the view of Mann (2009). This was supported by the work of Bonta *et al.* (2008) in Canada, who argued that supervising officers did not take an active or direct enough role in change work. They strengthened the notion that practitioners needed to work with offenders in a more therapeutic manner, to employ skills and techniques that were more conducive to focusing upon risk, need and responsivity (Bonta *et al.*, 2008). Bourgon *et al.* (2011) also encouraged the need for a more active and direct interaction, reinstating the offender as the primary change agent in their own right, through the exercise of agency (e.g. see Farrall, 2002, 2004).

Thompson (2009) argued that probation remains as a ‘person profession’ today and through the emergence of desistance theory, the importance of relational work has become more visible within broader contexts, due to theoretical advancements. While environmental variables associated with desistance were found to be of great significance (Farrall, 2002), the essential ingredients of effective practice through relational processes still held a place within contemporary probation practice.

Tracing the relationship through training

Through its reconfiguration over probation history, the position of the relationship has altered in training, in response to these changes. Up until the 1990s, Eadie (2000) highlighted that probation training took place alongside social workers, and at this time professional judgement remained a central feature to offender casework. Burke (2010: 40) acknowledged that this movement away from social work was largely policy driven in an attempt to ‘toughen up’ and increase the legitimacy of probation as a service, with the

general public. Burke (2010) also highlighted that at this time, social work was very much associated with humanitarian practice, while probation was seen as connected with that of control, creating a false dichotomy. Dowden and Andrews (2004) identified five dimensions of effective correctional practice, which included: the effective use of authority, modelling reinforcement, problem-solving, utilisation of resources and the maintenance of good interpersonal relationships. With limited research relating to staff characteristics within probation delivery, Dowden and Andrews (2004) argued that interpersonal influence in practice was maximised under the conditions of mutual respect, warmth and enthusiasm. While the findings of Dowden and Andrews (2004) supported the notion of addressing need and working responsively with offenders, the mechanical and standardised approaches to assessment and risk led to political pressure that distanced the practitioner, away from the offender (see Gelsthorpe *et al.* 2010). This was exacerbated through new training initiatives, as the Diploma in Social Work was abandoned in 1996 and replaced with 'on-the job' training, which encouraged a more analytical approach that was embedded within higher education, that is, the Diploma in Probation Studies. Goodman (2003) noted that the key responsibilities of practitioners at this time were centred upon working to protect the public and assess, manage and coordinate offenders, through case management. Burke (2010) highlighted that during this, practice was deemed as technocratic and the social work identity was threatened. With the What Works agenda prominent within practice, accredited programmes dominated and featured as the orthodoxy that threatened creativity and innovation of the practitioner (Whitehead and Thompson, 2004). Training was later replaced with the Probation Qualification Framework (PQF) in 2010 and while it retained some core aspects of the curriculum relating to values and ethics, Eadie (2000) argued that it successfully divorced itself from social work. The training became increasingly focused on distance learning and Treadwell and Mantle (2007) criticised it for losing an element of human interaction, which was characteristic of previous training initiatives. In this way, relationships lost some visibility within training as it did in practice. And yet, new interest is emerging in light of new demands, as the rehabilitative process is being acknowledged as a complex process and community rehabilitation companies (CRCs) seek training initiatives, which can creatively address rehabilitative needs of offenders in the community.

The visibility of relationships has also increased internationally in response to Trotter's work (1996) in Australia and Bonta *et al.*'s (2008) work in Canada. Trotter (1996, 1999) inferred the notion that relationships could be taught, focusing upon pro-social modelling and Bonta *et al.* (2008) promoted supervision training. These endeavours signified the importance of guidance and structured training, while also recommending continuous professional development (CPD) and consistent feedback on practice (Bourgon *et al.*, 2010). With the relaxation of National Standards in 2011, probation practitioners were encouraged to draw upon desistance research and focus upon

‘meaningful engagement’ (NOMS, 2011), reinforcing the need for pro-social modelling and relationship building specifically. While this was supported, it is questionable what was meant by ‘meaningful’ and how this was to be achieved within practice in light of the constraints and contradictory targets. The work of Bonta *et al.* (2008) provided a focus on CPD, which contributed to the establishment of the Offender Engagement Programme in 2010. The initiatives relating to Professional Judgement and Skills for Effective Engagement and Development (SEEDS) offered new challenges for practitioners, with the emphasis on reflective practice and relational work, which were familiar to those that were trained under the traditional social work umbrella, but not for those trained as case managers.

Relationships and transforming rehabilitation

Relationships on a boarder level, between the state and the criminal justice system, certainly have their place within contemporary penal debate. As free markets have emerged in light of the drive towards privatisation in England and Wales, probation has undertaken one of the more significant changes in its history. While market reforms can be traced back to the Thatcher years (1979–1990), the privatisation of some prisons furthered debates around the viability of broadening and extending the agents who can punish through a decentring of the state. Annison *et al.* (2014) highlight that this has created new relationships between governmental and business interests has influenced the development of a ‘shadow state’. With the current coalition’s plan to centre on managing offenders, it is inferred by the government that if licence conditions are enforced and orders met, the ways to rehabilitate are ‘flexible’, as ‘trust’ is placed in the hands of front-line professionals (MoJ, 2013). Robinson (2013) recognised numerous problems associated with the new plans that structurally meant that probation would be dismantled and practitioners dispersed among CRCs and the national probation service. These problems included: the encouragement of creativity but difficulty in securing contracts without substantive evidence of ‘effectiveness’; the promotion of risk-taking that is required for CRCs within a risk-averse society; and target-driven practice that may drown aspects of innovation due to contractual pressures. It is questioned whether the traditional humanistic ideologies of probation will survive this test or whether, as stated by Whitehead (2010), it is damaged beyond repair. This project aimed to reaffirm the number of reasons why probation should reconfigure relational work once more, to retain welfareistic values and fulfil the functions of contemporary probation practice in addressing recidivism and protecting the public. It is proposed that both are achievable and relationships take on different meanings with respect to the coupling of roles between risk and rehabilitation. To achieve this, I propose that the future of probation is co-produced and co-imagined *with* offenders to create, what Weaver (2012) would acknowledge to be a personalisation of services that support the processes of desistance. Relational work still plays a

significant role that is underappreciated within the current climate, despite being discussed consistently and fervently by the academic community. The resurgence of professional judgement, emergence of the desistance literature and subsequent focus on reflective supervision hopes to increase the visibility of relationships once more. And yet, contradictions still exist. While the criminal justice system may have been characterised by stable and fixed agencies in the past, Zedner (2006: 273) argued that it is emerging into a more fluid entity, due to the operation of market forces within contemporary penal practice. It is argued that this fluidity may also be relevant within relational work, as relationships ebb and flow at all levels, through communication and interaction (Lewis, 2014a), varying in visibility over time. And yet, such a structure may also threaten and prevent the emergence of positive and supportive relationships on broader levels of the system, as free markets compete for work with the promise to perform for the cheapest amount of investment. Within this climate, fluidity may increase as private organisations move in and out of the market in light of their success. It is proposed that this will lead to fractures within the system as relationships are built and then disbanded, if a company do not receive payment in light of poor results. Annisson *et al.* (2014) rightly presents the argument that a humanistic and personalised approach that is supported within the academic literature is in direct conflict with new emerging processes that are competitive and profit-driven through payment by result. The challenge as it sits today is to educate the public, policy-makers and those working to criminal justice to illuminate the reasons why a humanistic and personalised approach is important. By creating greater legitimacy of this notion, it is hoped that greater acceptance will follow.

Having situated the research within its context, this work will now turn to the methodological approach of the doctoral work, and discuss more broadly how relational work can be carried out effectively.

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3 Researching relationships in correctional practice

This chapter aims to focus upon how relational research can be effectively carried out and how relationships can be used in order to facilitate high-quality research. It will provide a rationale of my methodological approach and outline the techniques that were utilised within my doctoral project. The chapter will outline the reasons for using an action research paradigm and present a synopsis of the two studies that occurred prior to this project, as part of a wider research agenda. Details of the project, its sample and ethical issues will be addressed in order to provide a clear overview of the doctoral project that occurred between December 2012 and April 2014. In light of the cyclic nature of this research strategy, this chapter will also dedicate some time to the development of the visual tools that were used, drawing upon two studies that occurred prior to this project from June 2011 to October 2012.

Uncovering knowledge specific to relationships and interpersonal interaction poses many challenges. For instance, within any relationship, the relational experience is articulated (and somewhat limited) through language and is socially constructed for each individual involved. What may be deemed as a 'good' relationship for one individual may not be considered 'good' by another, and so pluralism exists that recognises that there are some elements of relationships that are unknowable or impossible to articulate. How one might experience unconditional positive regard may involve feelings, thoughts and physiological responses, yet these may differ from one individual to the next and during different moments over the course of the relational journey that is playing out. Relationships are therefore a challenge to research and recognition into the socially constructed nature of them is important. This ultimately became an issue that I was deeply rooted in unravelling, through a participatory approach that utilised new and innovative methods to try to capture knowledge around relationships. And so, a number of questions presented themselves before I embarked on this research. First, how could I create an environment in which individuals could feel at ease to discuss and explore meaningful relationships honestly and willingly? Second, how might I be able to capture these insights in order to create rich knowledge that moves us forward both theoretically and within practice? Third, how would my own relational experiences impact on such ventures and influence my own

interpretation of the knowledge that was unearthed. This chapter addresses some of these key issues to provide new methods to uncover relational knowledge.

The project took a purely qualitative approach in response to Higgins's (2009) argument that when using qualitative methods within criminological research, the distance between the researcher and those researched is shortened and the values of the researcher can be used to mould the research. From reviewing the literature, distance featured within both the prison and correctional literature (see Liebling, 2005; McNeill and Robinson, 2013) and creating a research climate that was conducive to my research values relating to this project was a priority. Within the interviews, reducing the visibility of the powerful researcher over the powerless researched was an obstacle, as levels of trust to 'outsiders' may have led to participants who were not receptive to relational discussions. And yet, Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Goodley *et al.* (2004) recognise that participants do not have a passive role within qualitative research, but an active role that enriches interpretations of the world around us. Guba and Lincoln (1994) highlighted this power imbalance between the 'expert' researcher and the relatively powerless participant and I embraced a participatory position with the hope of alleviating differences where possible. Framing the offender as an 'expert' in their own life and relationships meant that their legitimacy was acknowledged and a process of co-construction was nurtured. The offender voice has become a popular term used within the academic community and seems almost tokenistic, when attempting to secure research funding. This was certainly not my personal experience as I can openly acknowledge that I have learned about correctional relationships through my relationships with individuals who offended. Whether this has been moments of insight, periods of difficulty or episodes of resistance, I have found great value in these relationships. Overcoming relational obstacles was challenging during my days as a practitioner, and yet through this journey I have secured a strong faith that relational difficulties can be overcome through listening and perseverance. McWilliam *et al.* (2009) acknowledge that a participatory perspective assumes that by listening to experiences, knowledge transpires through human interaction and interpretation. Throughout this research endeavour, I have found my commitment to enhancing the offender voice has grown stronger and I feel passionate about offender inclusion. I adopted this standpoint because I value the offender as an individual and believe their experiences can illuminate relational research.

Cooper (2001) highlighted that within social work practice, there needs to be a greater emphasis on co-constructing viable relationships with services users, with the purpose of promoting anti-oppressive and participatory practice. This inclusion needs to also exist within probation and prison practice, in order to create a culture which recognises the importance of the offender voice and bridges the gap between knowledge and practice as well as 'them and us'. There are a number of opportunities where this can take place more

intrinsically within the organisational structures of these institutions. Providing practitioners with the tools to carry out more primary research opportunities throughout their career would reinforce the importance of developing accessible and valued evidence-based knowledge and promote a more organic learning culture. Within the current Probation Qualification Framework, practitioners are encouraged to carry out literature-based explorations rather than primary research. The process of carrying out primary research through an application to National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is both lengthy and challenging and a coordination of evidence-based knowledge to practice lacks co-ordination and implementation. This highlights the lack of value that is placed upon research currently within criminal justice in England and Wales and the missed opportunities for policy-makers, practitioners and academics to transform practice. Giving practitioners (and offenders) this opportunity with greater autonomy could hold great significance as practitioners would effectively feed practice, through primary research endeavours, promoting greater investment in their role and their skills in building generative theory. Cooper (2001: 726) recognised that by promoting generative theory within practice, a 'humanisation' of human science could hold great value in seeking new and alternative ways of practice. Under the ideas of Transforming Rehabilitation and the promise of opportunities for innovation and creativity, such a venture could be well justified, if such a promise is genuine.

The position of the researcher

While my positionality to the research has been previously acknowledged, further elaboration is appropriate, as my place within this project was unique and important. Kerstetter (2012) presents some insightful developments relating to researcher positionality and how her outsider status assisted her in collecting a deeper level of information, due to the increased distance between the researcher and the researched. Conversely, Asselin (2003) outlined the benefit of being an insider, including a greater level of acceptance to the group that was being studied. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) highlighted that sharing commonalities between the researcher and the researched can lead to a greater willingness to share experiences, resulting in genuine empathy and understanding. Not only is it accepted that researcher bias can impact upon the collection and analysis of data, but there is also a challenge for the researcher to separate herself from the participants as an insider (Kerstetter, 2012). Asselin (2003) recommended that insider researchers must gather data with their 'eyes open', striving to address research as if they knew nothing about the topic in question. It is questionable whether this is possible, as this notion poses a real challenge to any researcher working as an insider within their field, particularly when studying something they have experienced. The recognition of bias and its effective management, through collaborative analysis and triangulation, aimed to safeguard the validity and reliability of my research. It is important to add that my position, per se, moved significantly

over the course of the three studies, evolving from insider to the 'space between' (between outsider and insider, Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Therefore, it may be more helpful to consider positionality in a different way than first envisaged. Upon reflection, these two positions oscillated over the course of the research and seemed to be dependent upon the role that would produce the most benefits at one moment in time. When offenders were discussing difficult relationships, creating a more outsider position allowed me to express empathy and present as an impartial agent with a curious tone. Conversely, when practitioners were discussing relational difficulties I used my insider status to express understanding, and to acknowledge and share events and feelings. I question whether this was because I was once an insider and the direct links with my own past experience and yet, when researching relationships, there is always some point of reference due to the universal experience of such interpersonal connections. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) argued that instead of considering the dichotomy of the insider–outsider distinction, researchers must focus upon providing open, honest and authentic interactions, which are used to accurately represent the experiences of the participants. Hence, it was this that I focused upon and built my research around, *through* the relationships I experienced throughout the research and previously in my own life.

Taking an action research approach

Reason and Bradbury (2008) stated that action research fuses both action and reflection through the participation of others, driving solutions that address systems on a micro and macro level. It is for this reason, primarily, that an action research approach was adopted for this project. Action research through a participatory approach held relevance and was responsive to the positionality of the research, the knowledge that was being developed and the context in which the research sat. Gilmore *et al.* (1986) discussed how action research aims to practically address concerns and offer solutions within practice and presenting alternatives to improve practice was personally important to me. Gilmore *et al.* (1986) argued that these two commitments require active collaboration and co-learning of all parties involved in the research.

Winter (1996) outlined some core principles of action research that acknowledged the importance of evaluation, validation, collaboration, creativity and triangulation. To apply these principles to this research project, a reflexive critique was utilised, drawing upon the perspectives of practitioners and offenders. A reflective journal was written from the beginning of the research period in 2011, to document the process and assist in subsequent reflection. Through a dialectical critique, communication was used extensively to form and develop further knowledge. During this process, offenders were consulted and their views were integrated within the project, playing the role of consultants in some respects. While some may consider this process as risky, this ultimately enriched the research process, generated excitement and I

felt it led to greater insights. A structural pluralism was adopted to consolidate each research phase and benefit from the many perspectives that were sought, moving the research in a particular direction. In this sense, it was organic and flowed both within each research project and between the three studies. Theory, practice and transformation were achieved in numerous ways through different opportunities of dissemination, including conferences, training events, senior management meetings and presentations both nationally and internationally. These provided a platform for discussion and development, both practically and theoretically and embraced this principle of transformation.

By reviewing alternative ways in which action research can be developed and delivered (see Robson, 2002; Reason and Bradbury, 2008), it was felt that Reason and Bradbury's (2008) structure was most appropriate, as it focused upon strategy, clarity and simplicity, rather than review and the analysis of contradictions. Within this structure five key stages to action research are outlined. First, a problem was identified and research questions were developed. While my discussions with offenders formed the basis of my research questions, I also relied upon my insider perspective and took the lead in shaping the research questions. The second stage of action research involves exploration into the issues being investigated. This involved producing a literature review that drew on other disciplines, in order to gain some insight into underdeveloped areas within correctional literature. The third stage of action research corresponds to the development of a strategy to study. Having explored some issues relating to the understanding of therapeutic correctional relationships in previous cycles, it led me to focus upon the micro processes that underpin relationships. Reason and Bradbury's (2008) fourth stage of action research involves the gathering and analysis of data, which will feature in the following chapters. Through a participatory approach, a strategy for analysis was constructed collaboratively and significantly helped the evaluative process, aiding better understanding. The final stage of the project has been structured thematically and relate to taking action and sharing the findings, with a conclusion that considers future practice, through action.

Justification of method

There were numerous ways in which relational research can be carried out, including observations, interviewing and narrative inquiry. While observational work highlighted to me some issues associated with therapeutic correctional relationships and contributed to the focus and emergence of the direction of this book, it was not a formal part of the project. This was due to my own positionality, as I did not feel observations alone could answer the research questions formulated, especially when relating to the relational narrative and past experiences. In addition to this, I did not want to be a passive player within the research and therefore felt that observational work was not suited to the research due to this.

Interviewing is a popular research technique within qualitative research and can be approached in many ways, depending upon the researcher's standpoint and research objectives. Universally, interviewing is concerned with the perspectives and experiences of the population being researched (Robson, 2002). Hagan (1993) considered three categorisations of interviewing: a structured interview where the interview is predictable, tightly scheduled and factual; an unstructured interview that is focused, yet open ended; and an in-depth interview that is detailed and flexible. Hagan (1993) argued that while a structured interview may assist the researcher to administer and code the data easily, it does have its disadvantages of limiting the participant and therefore reducing the likelihood of gaining rich data, which can inform the focus of the research. The unstructured interview provides this opportunity for the participant to explore their experiences with flexibility, though this can be harder to analyse and open to misinterpretation. Finally, in-depth interviews fulfil the remit of providing rich and 'thick' descriptions and hold the greatest of flexibility, though problems with analysis increase, due to the time that is required for detailed transcription (Hagan, 1993). Roulston (2010) highlighted the importance of considering the priorities within the research and how interview data can be used to answer the research questions effectively. If the research is simply fact-finding, then a structured interview would be better suited, though if it were an exploratory study, an in-depth interview would be more appropriate. With my desire to explore offender's past relationships, it seemed clear to me that a less structured interview would therefore be the best method for this project.

Hagan (1993) stated that an advantage of interviewing is that it provides a point of contact between the researcher and those being researched. This allows for interpretations made by the researcher to be clarified and confusions to be cleared up immediately. Interviewing also has the advantage of being able to cater to the needs of the participant, using visual aids to assist memory and allow deeper exploration into experiences. These advantages encouraged me to consider interviewing as a method, as I felt that visual aids would support the participants in recalling their relational experiences.

Narrative interviews can be used to explore an individual's story, though are generally used within in-depth unstructured interviewing. Guy and Montague (2008) stated that the premise of narrative work is not claiming to recall facts or truth, but is the subjective interpretation of the participant's story, at that moment in time. Presser (2009) identified that the variables of emotions, interviewee-interviewer interaction and mood, can cause the narrative to be changeable from moment to moment. This does indicate that the interviewer needs to be mindful of their questioning and role within the research and be careful when considering how they are going to execute a narrative interview. Seaton (2008) claimed that if the interviewer is successful in this undertaking, the information gathered from a narrative interview holds great richness. Narrative inquiry integrated well with some aspects of this project, and, consequently, was designed into the project, when considering the relational

narrative. Atkinson (1998) commented on a number of strengths of narrative inquiry within qualitative research. Primarily, he argued that the telling of a story can increase knowledge of the world and considers the participant as the 'expert', within that set of experiences. From exploring the narratives of offenders, Maruna (2001, 2004a, 2004b) reinforced the benefits of narrative work by considering how story creation can develop an individual's identity, allowing them to gain a greater understanding of the past. Furthermore, Cockcroft (1999) described how narrative inquiry allows the research to come alive and encourage new discoveries for the participant, a feature that supported the participatory approach that I wished to pursue. However, Cockcroft (1999) highlighted an element of unreliability due to the reliance on memories and commented that a questioning bias from the researcher can influence what is shared.

The decision to adopt a narrative inquiry was strengthened when I investigated different methods used within narratives, including that of Tagg's (1985) life history grids and Labov and Waletzky's (1997) considerations for investigating the meaning of important events, through a production of a chronological account. However, I did not want to use narratives as an exploratory tool that traditionally began with a solitary question. Instead, I selected a method that could motivate the participant to explore the topic of relationships and gain insight into their experiences, with the use of a visual aid. I believed that constructing simple visual aids could act as a graphical schedule that was clear and transparent to the participant and researcher, thus reducing the power differentials in the room.

Roulston (2010) introduced reflective interviewing, whereupon the interviewer-interviewee relationship is built upon genuine trust and rapport, to facilitate a self-revealing and in-depth conversation. Roulston (2010) linked these concepts to the co-construction of the interview by both parties and referred to how this may be conducive to psychoanalytical theories. These concepts appealed to me in light of the participatory approach and the topic of study. How such a style of interviewing is achieved can be strongly linked to psychotherapeutic methods and this notion was highly appealing and in line with my own values, skills and experience. Frost (2012) discussed how relationship stories provide important insights into the quality of relationships, something that was of great significance and central to this research. By integrating narrative inquiry, visual aids and reflective interviewing, I felt this would not only engage the participants, but stimulate rich discussions during the interviews to creatively answer my research questions.

Developing the project: a reflexive account

In order to gain a better understanding of the methodology used within this research project, an overview of past techniques should be evaluated, to demonstrate how the methods emerged. Once the research was scoped, a number of discussions with offenders and practitioners materialised, which

refined how the research questions could be addressed. During these discussions, the use of visual methods to assist in the research was supported, recognising the mutual benefits within a therapeutic context and acknowledging that they provided a good point of focus, which may reduce the pressure on the participant. Liebenberg (2009) discussed the extensive use of visual methods as a communication tool and how it can improve contextual accuracy, data relevance and heighten validity. Within this article, she cites Smith (1999) and Swartz (1998), who have argued that defining the researcher as 'expert', not only reinforces oppressive practice and discrimination of already marginalised groups, but also silences these groups in similar ways that they experienced in their lives. Due to the focus on relationships, this power needed to be minimised, as it could have threatened the ethos of the project. Liebenberg (2009) interestingly posed the question as to how researchers can address the issues of power within research and how researchers can improve the connection with those researched. Banks (1998) highlighted the importance of recognising participant agency, their rights as individuals and their ability to engage in research. Cho and Trent (2006) added that interacting with the researched and integrating them within the research process itself, can lead to an increase in accuracy and verify the experiences, values and beliefs of participants. This research reinforced the value of this approach and pursued the objective of hearing the 'subjugated voices not as "others", but as primary informants' (Fine, 1994: 78). This project strived to analyse relationships through alternative and, it is argued, more effective and creative ways.

I started by using visual aids within my first pilot study to explore how effective they were, focusing upon a narrative methodology. Gaining an understanding into life-altering experiences was also supported by White and Dotson (2010) and these two aspects of narrative work made it a convincing technique, reinforcing the concept of collaboration and gaining an insight into positive change, through relationships. Therefore, a number of visual techniques were explored and mind maps were adopted, following Reason's (2010) research that highlighted their accessibility and responsivity to contribute to a visual experience (see Lewis, 2014b, 2014c). From my work as a programme facilitator, I valued an interactive technique that was engaging, motivational and thought-provoking and so formulated a design collaboratively with two offenders, which could achieve these objectives. I worked with both practitioners and offenders to design the visuals and used their feedback to refine them. The reason for taking this approach was to encourage offender engagement in the research, gaining insights into their relationships, as well as discussing these experiences with me.

Upon reflection, I recognised both drawbacks and benefits to this approach. First, it was felt that engagement increased as participants constructed their own narrative prior to the discussions around significant therapeutic correctional relationships. The interview was very dynamic and the narrative provided a context in which offenders could discuss their relationships. In contrast, this meant that offenders took some time discussing different chapters within their

criminal history and less focus was dedicated to the main objective of the study; to explore relationships.

Through further discussions with offenders around the design, new talks were initiated when I secured the Sir Graham Smith (SGS) Award grant, to explore positive and negative relationships and their impact on offenders. The narrative content was removed for this project to focus more heavily on the different strands of the research. Post-it notes were used to elicit certain characteristics and these were placed on larger visuals during the interview by the researcher (see Lewis, 2014a for details).

From feedback, I designed a visual on two large flip charts, dedicated to positive and negative correctional relationships respectively with identical structure. Mind maps were chosen following Reason's (2010) recommendation, and I felt they were an accessible and helpful framework to collect relevant data.

During the data analysis phase, the offenders were considered and presented as equals regarding their views and how they constructed and attached meaning to the data as a whole. Two group analysis discussions were then organised for practitioners and offenders separately and the format of these sessions were identical in structure. All of the 221 statements were presented on the walls of a group room and each group was given three tasks; read all of the statements; confirm the themes; and create statements of meaning for each theme. Reflecting upon this process of analysis, it was interesting to observe how the offenders made sense of the themes, exploring ideas with each other and immersing themselves in the data. The insights I gained from the offenders were significant and it challenged my own analytical approach. It also highlighted the capabilities of offenders to analyse the data, including their significant role with respect to *how* data is analysed effectively. The inclusivity prior, during and after the research was invaluable to me, as it echoed the views of Fine (1994), placing the offender as 'expert' within the research. Press (1991) stated that visual media can assist marginalised groups to understand their own lives and I felt that the participants gained something from the experience. The movement of power was believed to be of particular significance to the research and I believed this gave offenders the space to magnify their voice I was promoting.

When considering the problems associated with this methodology, the loss of control at times was an uncomfortable reality for me. Offenders initially contradicted my own analysis on some of the data; yet, as we worked through this informally and within a safe climate, we came to a mutual understanding that proved far more valuable than I had anticipated. While my experiences of therapeutic correctional relationships assisted me within my analysis of the data, at times I found myself asking questions that verified my own position and views, as opposed to those that were participating. I became mindful of this relatively quickly and it was something that I had discussed with offenders prior to the interviews, making it more manageable within the research. I also found that taking notes reduced the flow of the interviews. However, in

retrospect, the collaborative nature of the project led to some in-depth discussions and views from all parties that were accepted respectfully, challenged rigorously and consequently shed new light on the research questions. These benefits reinforced the views of Wood (1986), who highlighted that such perspectives brought greater ownership, which lead to more meaningful data.

During the second pilot study, a number of problems were identified through discussions with offenders, which determined a new direction. It became evident that there was a need to distance myself from the offenders that had been recruited for the study. Knowing the participants meant that they were very open with me from the beginning of the research, though I felt that for the doctoral project, I would still be able to create a positive climate without the requirement of knowing them personally.

Following this cycle of the research, I asked an offender if he would be happy to work through our relational narrative. We spent an hour reflecting upon our relationship, how it developed and the challenges we had experienced. In this honest session, it transpired that certain events led to negative outcomes and the session not only strengthened our relationship, but opened up ways of talking about therapeutic correctional relationships, which were new and exciting for me. I came to realise that our relationship varied in quality over time. This early session sparked my interest in ruptures and the idea of a relationship tearing temporarily and later repairing. A further reflection from the session was relevant to the skills that were elicited during our relationship. The offender discussed how skills such as listening and empathy were of particular importance at the start of the relationship. This allowed me to consider how knowledge gained about relational narratives might support practitioners in their therapeutic correctional relationships.

In response to discussions with offenders, reoccurring themes were emerging and yet there was still a need to focus the research and gain a clearer direction, particularly as some of the themes had not been addressed within correctional research at that time. To remedy this ambiguity, four focus groups were designed with practitioners, which involved a two-part focus group with offender managers and programme facilitators at my local probation trust. My objective was to uncover how practitioners viewed relational processes and whether these were similar to offenders. Robson (2002) highlighted numerous advantages associated with focus groups, which met the requirements at this stage of the research, including the benefits of focus groups being enjoyable, empowering and an effective technique in gathering qualitative data. Robson (2002) also outlined some of the key disadvantages of focus groups, including the lack of generalisation that can be inferred from the data, the need for the researcher to hold expertise within group interactions, the potential conflicts that may arise between members of the group and the limitation of key questions that can be explored. In response to these disadvantages, the purpose of the focus groups was not to generalise but to explore some tentative and provisional ideas that had emerged from offender discussions and the literature. I felt it would be interesting to contrast two

differing roles within the context of probation, to identify whether there were any subtle differences between practitioners in an offender management role and those in a more rehabilitative role. I split the focus groups into two parts, the first exploring correctional relationships (and therapeutic correctional relationships) and the latter discussing relational difficulties. This meant that I could carry out three hours of group discussion with both groups, over two sessions. It was hoped that these changes, along with my experience as a facilitator, would ameliorate some of the issues that disadvantage focus groups over other methods.

Roulston (2010) outlined that, due to the nature of focus groups, the participants outnumber the moderator and so provide opportunities for participants to set the agenda and pose the questions. Roulston (2010) also highlighted that all members involved in this process can transform their understanding of the topics and themes that are being discussed. This, in itself, added further justification for the use of focus groups within my work and was in line with my participatory and transformative agenda.

Ethical considerations to relational research

Hagan (1993) argued that when choosing an appropriate technique, the main objective is to answer the research questions posed and use a method that avoids as many ethical problems as possible. Relational research presents additional ethical problems in that the relationships developed during a research endeavour may be used to uncover knowledge that is damaging in nature both on a reputational and personal level. Erikson (1986) highlighted the importance of transparency, when discussing the purpose of the research and this is of particular relevance with respect to relational work. In order to do this, I constructed an informed consent form and information sheet that outlined the purpose of the research and how the information was going to be used in the future. I also stated that anonymity would be maintained and confidentiality would be upheld, unless something was disclosed during the interviews that either placed the offender or others at risk of harm.

During the pre-test of the interviews, it was highlighted by an offender that recalling relational memories of his prison experiences brought forward some difficult emotions. With this in mind, I emphasised prior to the interview that if the participant wished to stop the interview, then this would be respected and no negative consequences would occur. I also offered support services that were available in the event that it became evident that the interviews had stimulated memories that later proved difficult to manage. Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) standpoint was encouraging when considering this issue, as they suggested that narratives can provide a safe space to discuss an individual's story, with a good listener. This highlighted to me the need to focus on my listening skills and give the participants time to explore their own stories, at their own pace. Finally, Watson (2009) highlighted an interesting ethical aspect of narrative work specifically by considering the use of empathy within

interviews, believing it to be manipulative and capable of leading to ethical ambiguity. He argued that by expressing empathy, the researcher's own values are placed on the participant and this influences the narrative inquiry. To manage this, I tried to utilise my skills of listening and minimise value-laden comments through summarising, as recommended by Roulston (2010).

I felt the most significant ethical consideration involved my own role within the project. To minimise role conflict where possible (as there were elements I wished to embrace), my role was made explicit prior to the focus groups and interviews and I ensured that I was not previously known to the offenders who participated in the research. During the focus groups with practitioners, I was known to those who participated, though due to the generic nature of the discussions, I did not envisage a role conflict to be problematic. It was also felt that my between status during the focus group enabled me to discuss relational difficulties with sensitivity and respect. To strive towards a high-quality piece of work with robust methodological techniques, I aimed to use collaboration to its fullest, using ex-offenders, offenders and practitioners to provide feedback on my design and results at each stage of the research.

The research process

Through an email invitation, 17 practitioners were recruited in total: seven programme practitioners (six females, one male) and ten offender managers (five females, five males; see Table 3.1 for additional details) for the focus groups.

Robson (2002) considered that a size of six to eight participants to be an optimum group size and this was achieved in two of the groups, with the remaining two focus groups consisting of four and ten participants respectively. I felt in light of practitioner time restraints, these numbers were satisfactory and due to past group facilitation experience, I felt comfortable managing the larger and smaller groups. For the offender sample, I recruited 18 participants and the size of the sample was dependent upon levels of data saturation.

As qualitative research tends to focus on areas of research where little is known, Mitchell and Jolley (2001) argued that the main purpose of sampling is to assist in answering the research questions that have been formulated. Large samples are seen as unmanageable and unnecessary within qualitative research as the ethos focuses upon gaining value from the perspectives of a population, not guaranteeing statistical significance or generalisable findings. Hagan (1993) also recognised that an appropriate sample size can only be determined by examining the desired outcomes, levels of saturation, funds available and the accessibility of the sample. From these observations, I considered a purposive sample within my research, drawing on practitioners from a rehabilitative role (programmes) and managerial role (offender managers).

The offenders were also from a broad range of backgrounds and had varying degrees of probation experience (see Table 3.2). All of the participants were currently on a supervision order and had been supervised by at least two probation supervisors, with their 'experience' of probation ranging

Table 3.1 Practitioner information for those that participated in the focus groups

<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Experience working in probation</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Janet	Programme Facilitator	14 years	female
Richard	Programme Facilitator	14/12 years	male
Sophia	Programme Facilitator	14 years	female
Georgina	Programme Facilitator	12 years	female
Kate	Programme Facilitator	6/12years	female
Karen	Programme Facilitator	6 years	female
Judy	Programme Facilitator	7 years	female
Michael	Offender Manager (PO)	3 years	male
Holly	Offender Manager (PSO)	5/12 years	female
Joel	Offender Manager (PSO)	5 years	male
Stacey	Offender Manager (PSO)	4/12years	female
John	Offender Manager (PSO)	6 years	male
Andrew	Offender Manager (PO)	8 years	male
Charlie	Offender Manager (PO)	1/12 years	male
Claire	Offender Manager (PO)	8 years	female
Penny	Offender Manager (PSO)	6 years	female
Lauren	Offender Manager (PO)	14/12 years	female

from five months to 24 years. While the participants had committed a range of offences over the course of their lives, I did not wish to use this information explicitly to carry out sub-sample analysis due to the exploratory nature of the project. This project instead focused on uncovering knowledge of correctional relationships without making generalisations or classifications relating to specific offence types, in order to promote diversity and individualism. A full offence and diversity profile was not collated (so this knowledge was formulated on offender information), as commonalities across offender ‘groups’ were focused upon rather than creating further labels and stigma.

This differed from the two preceding projects, which required an offender to have had ten years’ experience of the service. This alteration was made in light of a discussion I had with an offender that focused on how the nature of relationships may change over time, as well as between different practitioners. For example, how relationships are represented to an individual may be more entrenched for longer serving offenders and I wanted to pursue the way in which offenders construct their understanding of the correctional relationship, instead of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ relationships alone. Therefore, it was a criterion that each participant had experience of at least two probation relationships.

During the first focus group, a discussion took place to define the notion of a therapeutic correctional relationship among the group. Practitioners were

Table 3.2 Offender information of those interviewed

<i>Name</i>	<i>Experience with probation</i>	<i>Offences</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>
Alex	12 years	violence, domestic abuse, drugs	male	white British
Phil	11 years	violence, sexual offence	male	white British
Ashley	6 months	violence, theft	male	white British
Gary	10 years	PPO, drugs	male	white British
Mason	5 months	theft, drugs	male	white British
Andrew	9 years	drugs, burglary	male	African-American
Nick	17 years	drugs, theft	male	white British
John	20 years	PPO, drugs, theft	male	white British
Sandra	11 months	theft, drugs, violence	female	white British
Will	15 years	violence, drugs	male	white British
Steven	6 months	deception	male	white British
Paul	13 years	drugs, violence	male	white British
Peter	7 months	violence	male	white British
Joseph	24 years	theft, deception	male	white British
Jason	14 years	drugs, violence	male	white British
Tom	8 months	theft	male	white British
Adam	10 months	domestic violence	male	white British
Mark	24 years	drugs, violence	male	white British

asked to consider how they may construct different stages of a therapeutic correctional relationship. Once this was agreed, these were written on blue Post-it notes and placed on the visual. Grey Post-it notes were then used to consider the factors that promote therapeutic correctional relationships and these were added to the visual. Practitioners were asked to reflect upon a relationship that was significant to them and plot its journey at each stages (see Figure 3.1). This allowed me to expand upon the understanding of the different stages and see how they may apply to real-life scenarios.

In the second focus group, practitioners were asked to consider another relationship that stood out, but for opposite reasons to the relationship discussed in the first session. From this, discussions centred on events that may cause the relationship to break down or be threatened. These were documented on a mind map and suggestions were made around how such events (ruptures) could be repaired within practice. These were written on yellow Post-its, next to the corresponding rupture (see Figure 3.2).

I conducted the focus groups with both offender managers and programme facilitators separately and at the end of the last focus group, asked the

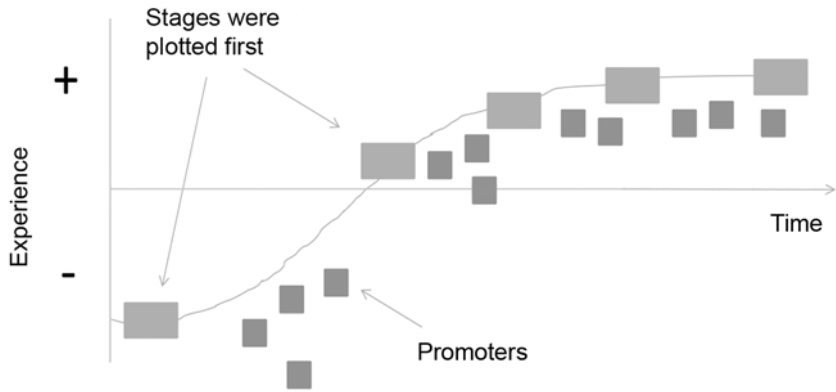


Figure 3.1 The template design of the visual used within the practitioner focus groups and offender interviews

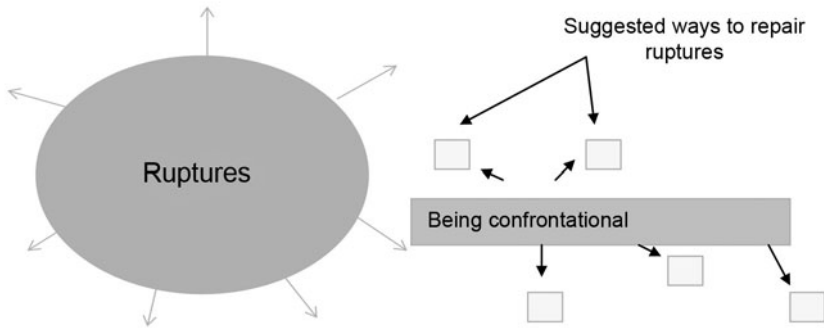


Figure 3.2 The visual template designed for stage two of the focus group

practitioners to refer offenders that may be suitable to the research. Practitioners were asked to discuss the research with their offenders informally for an expression of interest, and depending on the response, I invited them to opt in to the research. If interest were elicited, I discussed informed consent and organised an individual interview. There was anxiety that practitioners would only refer offenders with whom they felt they had a good relationship, though it became quickly evident that this was not the case. Practitioners willingly recognised relationships that were difficult, as a way for the offender to have an opportunity to discuss this with me, in order to explore the reasons why this was the case, in a confidential environment. This meant that I received a range of offenders that had varying degrees of relational experience. To compare this to the recent work, King (2013) took a similar approach of inviting participants, using practitioners as intermediaries. King

(2013) commented that the supervising officers may have recruited offenders who were more willing or engaged and this may have altered the findings and produced a less reflective sample. While there was a risk of this, it was felt that my position 'between' the research reduced the effect of this occurring to the same degree. There seemed to be a generally accepted principle of trust between myself and the practitioners, which I do not think I would have received if I were an outsider.

During the first set of focus groups, it became increasingly evident that the use of Post-it notes and the visual aids seemed to impact upon the flow of the group. Having completed similar processes previously with only one participant, the interruptions were exacerbated within a group setting. While a great deal of information was collated and the notes were of great assistance when exploring the data in detail, it was felt that within a one-to-one environment, the visual could be seen as more of a communicative tool rather than an instrument by which data was collected.

During the interviews, I initially asked offenders to describe their understanding of the correctional relationship. From the feedback, I asked them to consider a relationship that stood out for them and describe the relational narrative, asking them to plot its development on a simple visual (see Figure 3.1). The stages of the relationship elicited by both focus groups were verified by two offenders that had experiences in therapeutic correctional relationships, during a pre-test phase.

Offenders were encouraged to discuss aspects of their relational narrative and the visual was used to explore different points of the relationship. Additionally, they were asked how aspects of practice promoted a therapeutic correctional relationship¹ at each stage (indicated in Figure 3.1 by grey boxes). Questions were used such as; 'Has there been a time when you have felt uncomfortable in supervision?' and the visual was also used to signpost questions around particular dips that were identified during the relational narrative. The final part of the interview moved towards a discussion regarding how practitioners could encourage the repair of these temporary difficulties. The interview was loosely structured around the visual and the simplicity of the visual aid meant that certain points of the narrative could be explored through questioning.

The data that was retrieved for both the focus groups and interview was analysed thematically and transcribed fully using Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidance. During this process, codes (an element of interest regarding a phenomenon Boyatzis (1998)) were generated, the main themes were identified and unresolved thematic questions were formulated, forming the structure for the analysis discussions. As identified by Braun and Clarke (2006: 10), a theme 'captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning'. Two offender and two practitioner discussions were organised over a four-week period to present questions, name the themes and explore the data in detail. I felt these meetings confirmed the results and provided greater assurance in the findings that were reported, developing new methods of triangulation.

In conclusion, Burrows (2013) rightly states that a significant aspect of relational research is for the researcher to ensure participants have a voice. In this way, researchers have an ethical responsibility to carry out relational research in a sensitive manner, which is mindful of the power differences between the researcher and those researched. Co-constructing knowledge attempts to balance out the playing field where possible to ensure that research is conducted with people rather than on people. This chapter has discussed issues relating to epistemological perspectives and positionality, the reasons for adopting a participatory approach through an action research paradigm and a discussion of the methods used within this project to promote valuable relational research within a correctional setting. It has mapped out how my techniques were developed through collaborative discussions and reflexive evaluation. The aim of addressing my research in this way was to not only liberate the offender voice within my research, but gain rich data that I believed to be a true representation of that voice, using innovation to create an inclusive experience for those who were involved. The next chapter will concentrate on the main findings of the research that corresponds to the research questions of the research project. These will be discussed in light of the literature to consider the extent of their contributions.

Note

- 1 Through discussion, therapeutic correctional relationships were identified as nurturing collaborative relationships that promoted positive change and it was determined whether offenders had experienced therapeutic correctional relationships by assessing how they described these relationships during the interviews.

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4 Introducing the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships

While some research within the realms of offender rehabilitation has been undertaken with regard to what is understood by therapeutic relationships, a number of tensions and issues emerge when a therapeutic relationship, in its purest form, is placed within a correctional context. Of course, the nature of this context is not only fluid from moment by moment, but also varies from context to context. This presents many challenges. First, how one might capture such a context and, second, how such a context influences a therapeutic relationship and changes the way it is formed and nurtured. This chapter will examine what is understood by a therapeutic relationship, how a correctional context (such as prison or probation) may alter the construction and meaning of a therapeutic relationship and how offenders and probation staff see these relationships. Alternative disciplines will be explored due to a dearth of correctional literature linked specifically to therapeutic correctional relationships, though a critical discussion will occur relating to the extent to which relationship knowledge can be applied to correctional settings.

Understanding the therapeutic correctional relationship

The therapeutic relationship has been well documented within psychotherapy (Freud, 1953; Greenson, 1965; Kokotovic and Tracey, 1990). The therapeutic relationship¹ in its purest form was founded within the field of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century. Freud (1953) was one of the first to acknowledge the importance of a positive bond between patient and analyst, a bond that was rooted in transference (a process whereupon a patient projects early attachments onto their practitioner) and crucial for positive results.

Kokotovic and Tracey (1990) outlined that the therapeutic relationship can be broadly defined as the feeling that both participants can work collaboratively towards a shared goal. Bordin (1979) extended this definition and built upon Greenson's (1965) work, proposing that there are three components to a therapeutic relationship; an agreement of task, goal (that referred to the main outcome of treatment) and a positive attachment between client and practitioner (bond). While Bordin (1979) noted that a therapeutic relationship is not, in itself curative, he argued that it is the ingredient that enables treatment

to be followed faithfully. Skeem *et al.* (2007: 338) argued that Bordin's model (1979) was not fully appropriate to forensic settings due to the power differentials that exist, highlighting the increased complexities that dual-role relationships hold, compared to pure therapeutic relationships. As Trotter (1999) acknowledged, it is possible to satisfy therapeutic and social control roles, through the process of role clarification. This would suggest that a similar kind of relationship can still operate within a correctional context, under particular conditions but it needs to be managed sensitively in light of its context. While therapeutic correctional relationships may be more complex, this does not necessarily mean that aspects of the therapeutic relationship do not exist within a therapeutic correctional relationship. Ross *et al.* (2008) used Bordin's triad (1979) within their revised model of the therapeutic correctional relationship specific to rehabilitative work, with an acknowledgement of its limitations. They highlighted the overly simplistic nature of Bordin's model (1979), and yet Safran and Muran (2003) believed Bordin's (1994) presentation of a therapeutic relationship was deceptively simple and successfully highlights the multidimensional nature of such relationships (Safran and Muran, 2003). In relation to these opposing positions, it is argued that while Bordin's (1994) notion of the therapeutic relationship may appear simple, the fluctuating and interdependent features of the therapeutic relationship are recognised and at its time of creation, significantly advanced theoretical understanding.

Carl Roger's (1967) development of a humanistic, client-centred theory also contributed to significant developments within this field and acknowledged the possible healing properties of the therapeutic relationship, through the conditions of mutual respect, unconditional positive regard and congruence between self and action (Rogers, 1967). Through these advancements and the consistent (though moderate) findings of a relationship–outcome correlation (Eaton *et al.*, 1988), a wave of interest into the formation and management of therapeutic relationships surfaced through the works of Horvath and Luborsky (1993). Such developments began to stimulate new thinking associated with the notion that was not limited to knowledge surrounding relationship formation alone, but also the resolution of ruptures, a subject dominated by the work of Safran (1984–present). This highlighted the multidimensional aspects of therapeutic relationships and their complexities through the processes of co-construction, between client and practitioner (Hedges, 1997). Consequently, questions arose regarding how therapeutic relationships compared to those that were situated in a correctional climate, such as prison or probation.

Odiah and Wright (2000) argued that aspects of a therapeutic relationship are not possible within coercive settings, as correctional relationships can be used to gain information regarding an individual, which could ultimately be used against them. This notion is strengthened with Safran and Muran's (2003) proposition that a therapeutic relationship requires the process of *negotiation* between the client and practitioner; yet within a correctional

context this is problematic, as sentencing is imposed upon the offender and opportunities for negotiation are limited at first sight. Conversely, Clark (2005) recognised the problems associated with a ‘them and us’ culture within probation work and proposed that a relationship is possible, if the right climate is created. This is reinforced by my work (Lewis, 2014b), which illustrated how probation staff can use their power in different ways, which could prove conducive or detrimental to the therapeutic relationship. These insights imply that power differentials are inherently present within correctional or rehabilitative practice, and opens the debate of whether the representation of power may be of importance.

There are also numerous benefits of applying psychotherapeutic work to a correctional context. First, as Safran and Muran (1996) argued, by identifying ruptures and understanding them, it may be possible to develop principles to assist practitioners in their work. Second, a rupture is individualistic and through rupture knowledge, criminal justice practitioners can become more equipped to recognise ruptures and manage them. While therapeutic correctional relationships may differ from one offender to another, Safran and Muran (1996) highlighted that sequences of recurring states can occur and identifiable patterns can emerge, if the practitioner is attuned to them. In the same way that each individual has relational schemata (or mental models), it is argued that patterns can also exist which are characteristic to a specific relationship. This is evident in everyday relationships, as similar patterns emerge over time, as both individuals learn how to relate to one another and express themselves. As highlighted by Lewis (2014b), correctional relationships can impact negatively on the processes of desistance, through feelings of bitterness and anger that are experienced by offenders during negative correctional relationships, as a response to staff behaviour. Similarly, Lieberman *et al.* (1973) recognised that variables such as confrontation, anger and rejection can impede change. Therefore, it is essential that relational work is of good quality and practitioners are aware that relational processes are occurring and act upon them appropriately. Bonta *et al.* (2008) rightly argued that there is limited knowledge relating to ineffective measures that can turn off an offender. Clark (2005) supported such a notion and stated that the backing away or shutting down of an offender can occur and lead to possible disengagement. These ideas can be aligned to the work of Safran *et al.* (2011) relating to rupture markers, which indicate when a rupture has occurred through observing client behaviour (e.g. withdrawal, confrontation or avoidance). Such behaviours can hamper correctional practice and hence, a study that explores ruptures, will benefit criminal justice practitioners and develop the theoretical understanding of relationships within correctional practice.

In the pursuit of understanding therapeutic relationships within a correctional climate, Ross *et al.* (2008) provided a thorough and critical review, which highlighted that a therapeutic correctional relationship is central to facilitating positive change. However, they argued that relational work must be evaluated differently due to the power differentials inherent to correctional

work, thus proposing a new theoretical revision of therapeutic correctional relationships. This alternative context led to numerous issues including: the presence of hierarchical power, the absence of voluntarism and the limitations of confidentiality.

Ross *et al.* (2008) not only highlighted the complexities associated with the therapeutic correctional relationship and its interactions, but recognised the importance of the practitioner, offender and context. Ross *et al.*'s (2008) work highlighted that relationships are complex by their very nature and when situated within an offending context, can become complicated, changeable and malleable. Within their revised theoretical model, Ross *et al.* (2008) considered both the composition of the practitioner and offender, highlighting the commonalities that exist (i.e. personality, attachment, interpersonal schemata and goals/expectations), as well as specific differences (i.e. practitioners skills and client readiness). When conceptualising the therapeutic correctional relationship, Ross *et al.* (2008) and Lewis (2014b) attend to the practitioner and their influences and this is responsive to contemporary psycho-dynamical theories, which have further appreciated the role and impact of the practitioner, on the therapeutic relationship. Rogers (1967) discussed the importance of congruence between feelings, beliefs and behaviour, highlighting the alignment and marrying up of how a practitioner feels, what they think and how they act. Ross *et al.* (2008) acknowledged the importance of emotions and emotional receptivity or openness within therapeutic correctional relationships and appreciated that little is known about the role that practitioners' emotions play, within relational interactions. In conjunction with this, Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993) referred to the importance of receptivity and the client's acceptance of the practitioner and their role. This acceptance is influenced by the practitioner's use of authority, agreement on goals and willingness to negotiate. This can be linked to the work around penal legitimacy and the importance of criminal justice practitioners to behave with fairness and integrity (see Liebling, 2005). Work around receptivity (or openness) can also be linked to the work of Trotter (2009), who argued that skills in role clarification, pro-social modelling, collaborative problem solving and empathy, can influence the likelihood of recidivism. This supported the notion of Ross *et al.* (2008), that skills are an important asset of the practitioner, though it is questioned whether such skills are effective if therapeutic correctional relationships are not established to a particular depth or are 'good enough' (Ross *et al.*, 2008). Put simply, the application of skills may not 'work' to the same degree if the practitioner is not authentic and does not genuinely believe that an offender can change. While a practitioner may generally possess a belief in change and faith in rehabilitation, it is also normal for a practitioner to meet an offender that they simply do not connect with. It is argued that no matter how skilled they are this lack of congruence influences how the relationship will develop. It was an aim of my research to examine how emotions may play a role during the relational narrative and determine instances that could be identified as ruptures. While the academic

literature is quick to highlight the importance of relationships in correctional practice, little attention or guidance is provided when relationships go wrong.

Moving forward, a particular strength of the review provided by Ross *et al.* (2008) was the acknowledgement of the dynamic nature of therapeutic correctional relationships. They referred to the work of Safran and Muran (2006), who stated that therapeutic relationships are not static, but instead constantly move and shift. Within a correctional context, Mattinson (1975) elaborated on the story of the porcupines from Schopenhauer (1851), considering it from a correctional perspective. Within this parable, Schopenhauer (1851, cited by Mattinson, 1975: 24) described a group of porcupines who 'crowded themselves together one cold winter's day so as to profit by one another's warmth and so save themselves from being frozen to death'. Schopenhauer (1951) goes on to discuss how this company of porcupines eventually feel the need to move away from each other in order to avoid the feeling of pain from the sharp quills and yet come forward once more to seek warmth and comfort. In this sense the porcupines are toing and froing between the desire to relate and the desire to not be hurt. Mattinson (1975) conceptualised relationships as a process of 'trial and error' and argued that the psychological distance between client and practitioner varies over time and can be influenced by past experiences, attachment style and values around specific offences. Therefore, instead of relationships operating within the dichotomy of 'positive' or 'negative', it may be more realistically the case that relationships move between different positions with respect to distance, spatial comfort and quality. Safran and Muran (2003) referred to Kiesler's (1996) work and proposed that a tension exists between an individual's need for autonomy and relatedness. They drew on Kiesler (1996) as follows:

Persons interacting with each other continually negotiate two major personality issues: how friendly or hostile they will be with each other, and how much in charge or in control each will be in their encounters.

(Kiesler, 1996: 7–8)

Within correctional work, a challenge that may influence this dynamic position is in respect to the marginalisation that is experienced by offenders, whose control has been diminished at the hands of the state and publicly celebrated in the courts through the processes of punishment (Maruna, 2001). It is argued that based on this position, the offender is invariably disadvantaged and marginalised, making relatedness challenging, negotiation constrained, and trust hard to build.

While Clark (2005) and Mattinson (1975) referred to psychological distance, McNeill and Robinson (2013) discussed *social* distance in their discussions relating to legitimacy. McNeill and Robinson (2013) highlighted that offenders are more likely to comply with authorities, if they are perceived to be legitimate and the quality of legitimacy may alter over time. These propositions would indicate that distance can be psychological and social, which

can alter the position of the offender within the correctional relationship. McNeill and Robinson (2013) argued that through the development of a relationship and emergence of legitimacy, the social distance between practitioner and offender is reduced and a bond is encouraged. This can be linked to the work of Beetham (1991) and Beetham and Lord (1998), who proposed that power can be utilised more effectively, when it is perceived as both psychologically and morally legitimate. These discussions were framed within the context of political legitimacy and suggest that, in light of the political system in which criminal justice agencies are situated, power may influence distance on a broader level. The question arises as to how such agencies currently view the legitimacy of the state and how this may impact upon frontline work within a relational micro-level. Further work to uncover such tensions is suggested, to consider how high-level power impacts upon low-level practice.

Ross *et al.* (2008) described the importance of systemic processes, which are defined as the factors that are ‘outside of the control of client and therapist’ (Ross *et al.*, 2008: 409). They recognised that role conflict can exist if the ‘system’ (in this case, correctional services such as prison or probation) is not congruent or aligned to the practitioner. To strengthen this proposition, Orsi *et al.* (2010) argued that the development of a therapeutic relationship is influenced by the legal and institutional contexts surrounding the therapeutic process. It is proposed that the recent drive towards more retributive measures by the state, impacts upon the system and penetrates through all levels, from macro to micro. In support of this claim, Halleck (1971) found that practitioners construct their role on an ideological level that reflects both the moral and political world that exists within society, suggesting how the broader environment may influence those that work with offenders. Also, Lewis (2014a) stated that power flows throughout systems from a micro to macro level and consequentially, there is a need for power differentials to be considered in respect to how they operate. Foucault’s analysis (1977) relating to punishment considered the influence of power with respect to broader systems and how power operates within institutions. Garland (1990) highlighted that micro-level power is largely neglected within Foucault’s work and discussed how techniques of control within correctional practice needs addressing on a micro-level. This research aimed to illuminate how techniques of control are understood between practitioner and offender. Further to this, it aimed to critically explore the propositions of Garland (1990), who stated that the function of power may be multidimensional and can be configured both positively and negatively.

Broadening out correctional work: a quick look to prison

Turning our attention to other correctional institutions, prisons may also benefit from work around therapeutic correctional relationships. From the 1950s, Sykes (1958) highlighted the importance of respectful relationships and more recently Liebling’s work (and others) has reinforced the significance of

relationships in a number of ways (2000, 2011; Crawley, 2004). Liebling (2000) argues that relationships create institutional stability and the flow of relationships is highly important in terms of creating a positive moral climate based on legitimacy and fairness. While private prisons have been characterised as having high staff turnover and a lack of practitioner training (McElligott, 2007), good working relationships have been seen to exist within private prisons also (Crewe *et al.*, 2014) though low staffing levels has restricted these relationships in terms of providing opportunities for relationships to grow. When considering the reasons why relationships vary within penal institutions, Crewe *et al.* (2014) acknowledged that negative staff attitudes impact upon their relationships with prisoners. From exploring private and public prisons, both seemed to have their problems relating to relational work, whether these stemmed from a lack of support and practical help, a shallow bond between practitioner and prisoners or the overuse or underuse of power. These findings certainly chime with the work carried out in probation contexts and the notion of relationships becoming too close or too distant features consistently across probation and prison.

There are also pockets of penal practice where relationships are central to prison regime. HMP Grendon is a therapeutic community and is well known for its positive relationships between prisoners and practitioners. Bennet and Shaker (2010) highlight ways in which elements of good practice can be imported into other prisons and the tensions that may exist. They describe the difficulties in current prison systems needing to relinquish their ideas around authority and responsibility. But they also highlight the benefits of creating such a transformative cultural shift may be the first step in promoting a more relational focus in our prisons. Kelly (2014) found that the more prison practitioners positively engaged with prisoners, the more likely they held non-punitive attitudes. In this sense, it is argued that if relationships form the foundation of prison climate, the need to be punitive becomes largely redundant. These findings suggest that future opportunities to explore relationships within a prison context would certainly illuminate the extent to which therapeutic correctional relationships can operate within different contexts. This would not only support the development of moral performance within prisons but highlight what systemic aspects need changing on a broader level.

Therapeutic correctional relationships and complexity

Relationships may not only provide a positive experience through greater engagement and compliance (McIvor, 1992; Rex, 1999), but may also play some role in supporting the process of desistance. King (2013) argued that the perception of the relationship between practitioner and offender may impact on the likelihood of reoffending, as found within my recent research (Lewis, 2014b). King (2013) and McNeill and Robinson (2013) supported the notion that a criminal justice practitioner may have an enabling role, supporting

desistance and the development of pro-social identities. Comparatively, Shattell *et al.* (2007: 275) argued that therapeutic relationships can provide a 'dress rehearsal' for new ways of relating, and Hedges (1997) highlighted that additional learning can occur for the practitioner as well as the client, through the co-creation of a therapeutic relationship.

When applied to corrections, Bonta *et al.* (2008) stated that it is not relational factors alone that lead to change, but highlighted the facilitative nature of relationships, as mechanisms by which structured direction is possible. This work implied that relationships can be conceptualised in terms of climate or place; a place for growth and learning. Orsi *et al.* (2007) concluded from their work that relationships are interrelated with one another (that may operate within and between different individuals) and modifications in one dimension may affect others, either directly or indirectly. To develop this notion of relational complexity, Matthews (1997) argued that relationships are not linear in fashion (though we may make sense of them by looking at them in a linear way) but are instead, a set of parallel activities where different processes are evolving, at one point in time. Lewis (2014a) argued that within the context of probation work, relationships ebb and flow between different people, at different levels and within different systems. Safran *et al.* (2001) acknowledged that different patterns can exist within a therapeutic relationship and Bryan (1998) proposed that multiple pathways exist and similar outcomes can be actualised through different means. As numerous processes support change, some processes may deter it or even cancel change out, resulting in a dynamic and entangled outcome that is difficult to measure (Bernecker *et al.*, 2014). Such interactions have been described as 'complex relational webs' (Weaver, 2012), a 'relational interactive matrix' (Safran and Muran, 2003) or an 'intricate web of inter-relationships' (Mitleton-Kelly, 2003), which are defined and constructed, in reference to social environment. Such findings represent the enormity of relationships and highlight how difficult it is to understand and separate out relationships and their impact. It also signifies that ultimately, we need to accept there is an element we will never know.

How values influence relationships and play out in therapeutic correctional relationships adds to the complexity of them. While the significance of practitioner's values was outlined within Ross *et al.*'s (2008) model, I argue that hope and belief remain unattended to and underestimated. This may include how 'the relationship' can allow offenders to build hope (Flesaker and Larsen, 2012), as well as specific facets of the therapeutic relationship that may facilitate hope, such as genuineness (Horberg *et al.*, 2004; Shattell *et al.*, 2007) and enthusiasm (Bonta *et al.*, 2008). Within a probation context, a belief in change has been documented as an important variable in developing a therapeutic correctional relationship and the attribute of persistence, when relationships become challenging (Lewis, 2014b, 2014c). Day and Ward (2010) highlighted the importance of attending to practitioners' values within a forensic setting and proposed that this can impact upon the practitioners' characteristics, style and subsequent thoughts, feelings and behaviour. Day

and Ward (2010) draw upon Bordin's (1994) work and acknowledged that a practitioner's values can influence the ability of the practitioner to form a strong therapeutic bond. This would indicate that complexity does not only exist when comparing different relationships and their influence, but also exists within therapeutic correctional relationships, at different moments in time.

Focusing in on therapeutic correctional relationships

Within correctional literature, relational micro-processes are largely ignored. The importance of non-verbal or subtle personal presentation (i.e. tone) was deemed significant by Bedi *et al.* (2005), but do not feature significantly within correctional discourse. Within a probation context, Clark (2005) proposed that small gestures may demonstrate respect (e.g. shaking hands) and acknowledgement of such processes and their influence may be beneficial. Returning to the ideas around the therapeutic correctional relationship as a right rather than a privilege has been linked to the notions of a humanistic approach within rights-based rehabilitation.

The literature also highlights the importance of rights-based practice and the central themes relating to humanity and dignity within correctional practice. Ward and Salmon (2009) recognise that within correctional settings, tensions and challenges do exist, when retributive punishment is coupled with rehabilitation. They do however recommend that treatment is delivered with dignity, with the acknowledgement and appreciation of the offender's intrinsic worth. Within this context, Ward and Salmon (2009) propose that it is human dignity that contributes to the regulation of human relationships. The literature relating to rights-based practice does highlight the moral aspects of rehabilitation and also alludes to the idea that the focus and obsession with penalty and retribution, overrides humanitarian practice. As Ward and Birgden (2007) note, offenders are both violators and holders of human rights, and yet these rights do not seem to be mutually exclusive, but conditional upon one another. If you (the offender) have violated, then so must we. With the growing need for politicians in England and Wales to present a 'tough' line, punitive populism seems to nurture the idea that presents prison for punishment, rather than as punishment, through the removal of liberty. I argue that this contextual punitive climate creates a significant obstacle to rehabilitation and desistance and is in direct conflict with rights-based practice, for the remit of proportionality does not extend across into the domain of human rights; people are people. Within a prison environment for example, the cocktail of top-down punitive practice, exclusion and othering (or distancing) creates a difficult atmosphere for rights-based practice to exist. The long game of rehabilitation and reintegration does not seem to be visible and the impact of such practices is ignored; the resentment this may breed and legitimacy this may drown is not considered. Day *et al.* (2010) argued that a bond is therefore important to promote rights-based rehabilitation and contribute to good

practice. Indicators of this humanistic approach may include self-disclosure (Rabiner, 2003) and collaboration (Rex, 1999) as a way to demonstrate mutual trust and rapport within therapeutic correctional relationships. McMurrin (2002) outlined the paradox that exists within correctional work, as offenders have the right to be treated on a humanistic level, though at the same time, experience moral condemnation and social exclusion. This can be linked to how broader factors may influence correctional relationships, as factors outside of probation (e.g. political spin and the media) continues to shame and demonise the ‘criminal’ openly. Charles (2000: 18) acknowledged that contradictions exist with particular groups, such as young sex offenders, stating ‘if we don’t actually put them in physical cages then we put them in metaphorical cages that set them apart from others’. Charles (2000) proposed that a separating out of the individual and the behaviour is essential when working with this client group and using relationships in an interactive, fluid way is particularly important, rather than mechanical, prescriptive models. This contradictory position is described by O’Malley (1999) on a broader level in relation to the emergence of neo-liberalism and New Right politics. It would appear that such challenges and tensions have been observed within global, high-level penal practice, though a discussion relating to the contradictions that operate on a micro-level are largely ignored within the literature. This work aimed to examine whether contradictory practice operates within frontline practice and if similar patterns were observed at a micro-interpersonal level.

Therapeutic correctional relationships and diversity

A further theme that emerges within the academic literature is the notion that relationships are individualised and diverse. Lambert and Simon (2008) acknowledged that therapeutic relationships can be constructed in numerous ways, with a focus upon specific aspects (e.g. practitioner or client traits/contextual factors). Challenges and criticism of standardised and homogeneous practice have led to a reconsideration of how rehabilitative interventions are constructed in the future (Lewis, 2014a). Once again, this emphasises contradictions in practice, as offenders are rehabilitated through techniques relating to their individual strengths, yet categorised through the processes of actuarial justice under the new penology. With respect to therapeutic correctional relationships, it is consistently recognised that the assumption of homogeneity (or sameness) needs to be challenged once more. Put simply, relationships mean different things to different people (Orsi *et al.*, 2010). For example, Amaro *et al.* (2001) found that young girls value the emotional exchange that can occur within a therapeutic relationship, to develop self-efficacy and self-esteem. Zack *et al.* (2007) noted that with adolescent youths, therapeutic correctional relationships can be understood by Bordin’s (1979) three components and suggested that young people are more responsive to practitioners who present themselves as allies, rather than people in authority (Everall and Paulson,

2002). Zack *et al.* (2007) outlined that there may be different ‘types’ of therapeutic correctional relationships and recognised that the variety of relationships make them challenging to study. Furthermore, Kozar and Day (2012) suggested that different degrees of emphasis are placed upon different aspects of Bordin’s (1979) triad. To illustrate, Marshall *et al.* (2003) commented that ‘sex offenders’ may rely more heavily on the emotional bond between the practitioner and themselves, in order to fully explore their offending behaviour. Therefore, therapeutic correctional relationships may be unique to the individuals who partake in it, and yet they are conceptualised through the notion of one-size-fits all. It is important to recognise that differences lie *within* these groups, as different aspects of diversity impact upon one another. If this is the case, the movement within relational processes is not the only aspect of complexity that needs acknowledgement. The ever-changing construction of an individual, with their adaptive identities and diversities, ultimately makes the conceptualisation of therapeutic correctional relationships, challenging at best. Safran and Muran (2003) argued that there is a need to emphasise individuality and strive to construct new theories that are unique to specific therapeutic relationships, as opposed to using established theory and the processes of categorisation. This poses some serious challenges, in view of the context in which therapeutic correctional relationships operate. It is questionable whether individualised relationships can exist and thrive within a context that is so contradictory, due to the eventual impact such contradictions have on relationships. As described by Beck (1992: 2), ‘modernization involved not just structural change, but a changing relationship between social structures and social agents’. This would suggest that relationships are embedded in a societal structure that is constantly changing. Therefore, in the same tone that modernity (Bauman, 2000), security (Zedner, 2006) and legitimacy (McNeill and Robinson, 2013) are deemed fluid, it is argued that relationships too, take on this characteristic. Through a critical in-depth exploration into therapeutic correctional relationships, this research aimed to unearth the fluid mechanisms that underpin therapeutic correctional relationships, to support productive processes within correctional practice and promote a reimagining of relationships once more.

In light of the discussed challenges and tensions within correctional practice, it was very difficult to even consider how relationships could be understood. It was overwhelming. And yet, in view of the findings, I constructed the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships as a method of understanding relationships within correctional practice. This will be developed incrementally during the remainder of this chapter and therapeutic correctional relationships will be explored, through an examination of the processes that lie behind relationships, rather than the outputs of them. Diagrammatic figures will be integrated within this to aid the reader, with the objective of presenting a robust model that has a clear rationale.

Introducing the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships***Introducing the players***

As identified by Ross *et al.* (2008), the players that participate in a therapeutic correctional relationship have diverse and individualised personalities, attachments, schemata and skills. This was observed within the offender findings, as they constructed their own ideas of the probation practitioner in different ways. Some offenders used their current experiences of relationships as a point of reference, while others discussed past relationships, which seemed significant. Stories were also used as a way to assist in their own understanding of the therapeutic correctional relationship, reflecting upon those elements of the relationship that were of particular importance. Throughout the offender interviews, it was felt that each offender had experienced a therapeutic correctional relationship at one point in their life, though the frequency and depth varied considerably. All offenders opened their discussions, using what could be described as a blueprint of relationships, implying the adoption of relational schemata or representation. It was also observed that offenders initially made quite global judgements relating to practitioners, with one stating: ‘Some [are] good, some are bad, but at present, the probation officer I have got at the moment is good. She’s upfront with ya, she lets you know what you need to do ... but people in the past, they sign you off.’ Another said: ‘You get different types of people, from every walks of life.’ It appeared that the offender’s schemata seemed to be used as a point of reference, which assisted them to understand relationships with their current probation practitioner.

The data suggested that there were broader representations, relating to individuals in authority, which were referred to during the interviews, drawing comparisons between the police, prison staff, teachers and youth workers. For example, one offender stated:

ALEX: It’s hard ... it’s like meeting a schoolteacher, that’s what it reminds me of.

SARAH: What are the similarities between a probation officer and a schoolteacher?

ALEX: They are going to tell you what to do ... it is hard to explain ... When you’re in school, you know you have done wrong and you would see the headmaster and they can give you things to do, that’s what it is.

Another offender also used the ‘head teacher’ analogy as a point of reference:

I’ve been sentenced, but it’s not made to feel like a punishment in the same way that you might have to go and see the headmaster for a detention, if that makes sense?

(Mark)

While these broader schemata were largely based on previous experience, this supports the ideas of Ross *et al.* (2008) that interpersonal schemata are at play within therapeutic correctional relationships, though these findings provide some insight into how these specific representations can be developed about authority figures and translated into other authoritarian contexts. The offenders also discussed how their own representations had evolved over time, particularly those that were deemed as ‘experienced’² offenders. One offender stated:

I was judging probation officers with the people that they work with, like police officers and the courts ... [I] conceived them as people being control freaks because they like being in charge and that’s what you think it will be [like], like Local Authority. But when I met [named practitioner], he wasn’t like that, he was quite down-to-earth, he tries to treat you professionally, doesn’t try and bully ya.

(Peter)

This affirmed that the probation officer was not only seen as an individual, but also suggested that relational scripts adapt over time. From the interviews, it suggested that these players move during the course of the relationship, as they attempt to relate with one another or move apart, in the attempt to create individual autonomy.

From the offender’s perspective, the notion arose that practitioners may not be receptive to a therapeutic correctional relationship and consequently, this may result in a distancing of the offender, to the point of withdrawal. To illustrate, Alex stated:

I’m not going to bother with them, if they’re not going to bother with me. I’m not going, even if it does put me in a situation where I would go back to prison ... It is a stupid idea but I just think, I’ll do my licence, get it over and done with and that’s it.

This strengthened the proposals of Safran and Muran (2003), which highlighted how interactions can alter the positioning of each player, within the relationship. It also implied that while offenders may not be receptive to the therapeutic correctional relationship, this lack of receptivity (and distancing) may also be experienced by practitioners, as reinforced later in the findings. The two players and their movement is initially illustrated (see Figure 4.1) and will provide the foundations of the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships, though further attention will be paid to this movement as we progress.

Bordin’s triad: applicable to the therapeutic correctional relationship?

A prevalent theme within the data was associated with Bordin’s triad (1979) of bond, task and goal. First, it appeared that the depth of bond varied both

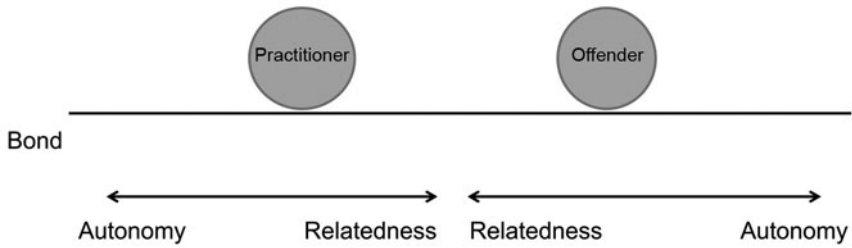


Figure 4.1 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: the players

between different individuals and over time, with respect to degrees of relatedness. Some offenders discussed their ideas of ‘the relationship’, in relatively superficial terms. One offender (Andrew) with a very negative view of probation stated plainly; ‘I have to come here, otherwise I would get in trouble.’ Other offenders discussed deeper relationships, describing them as more professional and collaborative. For example, Joseph described:

Well, it is professional on certain levels, isn’t it, because they have a job to do ... they’ve got to meet you halfway and I’ve got to do the rest, they’re not going to do it all for me.

This variance of bond may be due to the complexities relating to past relational schemata, or, in some cases, the degree of perceived belief or legitimacy, experienced by the offender. For example, Steven outlined:

Even though she knew my offence, she was still positive but she still knew I could be a better person. It was a belief, even though she didn’t know me, that kept me going.

Another offender discussed how he believed that the depth of this bond, was largely influenced by the practitioner:

Some really will help you and do really take an interest in you but some of them obviously, it’s all a job to them. But some of them it’s more ... When I’ve been in probation before, like, offending a lot and that, and I have to come to probation, otherwise, go to prison, I basically tell them what I want them to hear and they let me go. Some of them actually ask personal questions, like actually get to know you, but some of them don’t.

(Gary)

Some offenders deepened their ideas around the relationship even further and started to discuss it, in connection with task. For example, Tom stated:

[I] bond with them [practitioners], have a laugh with them, as well as getting down and doing the work. Being able to put the work to one side and have a talk about other things ... have a bond with them.

Another described this bond using a current probation experience: 'Yeah, we get on, we connect with each other, we listen to what each other are saying and that's basically it, we just get on with each other.' A final illustration was outlined by Alex: 'I know you've got to do a job ... but it not just a job. You're there with it. You're emotionally there with it.' This indicated the importance and a variance in the depth of a bond, as well as the possible interconnection between bond and task, though it seemed that the depth of this bond was only outlined by those that had experienced deep therapeutic correctional relationships and experienced positive outcomes from this.

Aspects of goal were also discussed during the interviews, particularly with those that had a positive relational schema. One offender stated: 'you've got to be on the same page'. Another outlined: 'you've got a good relationship with your probation officer ... when you are both working together and you both know what you want'. This last caption suggested that at some point, the players entered into the therapeutic correctional relationship, at a place where the relationship is deemed as good, or as stated by Ross *et al.* (2008), 'good enough'. Those that discussed particularly deep relationships, referred to feelings of advocacy from the practitioner. One offender (Will) said: 'She is fighting for me in my corner', another (Steven) outlined: 'He's backing me up, he's telling me to go for it and try my best.' This conjured up the visual movement of a practitioner coaching the offender, as they work towards a shared goal and position that is considered 'experience near', as opposed to 'experience distant' (Bien, 2008). This also supported the notion depicted by Schopenhauer (1851, cited by Mattinson, 1975) in his parable of the porcupines; as a bond grows and degrades, depending upon the relational experience. This was very evident during the interviews, as offenders spoke with strong emotion and honesty, relating to the impact and value of such experiences.

Bordin's (1979) final triad of the therapeutic relationship of task was referred to during the offender interviews. One offender highlighted the need for trust and cooperation with respect to task, Adam stated:

It's got to go both ways. In order for the probation officer to do that effectively and efficiently, then I've got to be open and willing to be cooperative, even though the circumstances ... I may not agree with them, but in order to work and ideally be better people, you go with it.

It would suggest that the degree of bond influenced goal and task, by perceived legitimacy. McNeill and Robinson (2013) discussed the fluidity of legitimacy and suggested that legitimacy can vary in depth and it is argued that in light of these findings, relationships are similar and interconnected with this process. This illustrates that therapeutic correctional relationships may be dependent upon certain conditions, in order to thrive. Due to this

entanglement and fluidity, it is suggested that such relationships should be developed through principles that promote individual theory building, as opposed to formulaic or standardised approaches. The findings implied that for a therapeutic correctional relationship to become possible, both players need to willingly *enter* into the therapeutic correctional relationship.

As illustrated in Figure 4.2, through relatedness, both players move towards one another, bond with one another and enter into the therapeutic correctional relationship. Upon this entrance, they are immersed into a climate that is similar to that of a therapeutic climate, consisting of respect, acceptance and support. At this stage in the relationship, if this becomes an eventuality, the therapeutic correctional relationship is extended to meet the criteria of task and goal collaboratively. While it is agreed that Bordin’s therapeutic triad (1979) features within therapeutic correctional relationships, it is proposed, similarly to Ross *et al.* (2008) that it is too simplistic, as the dynamic nature of these relationships is largely ignored. It is also argued that agreement of task and goal is somewhat dependent upon the degree of bond and that bond can vary and move over time.

Issues relating to need were also highlighted in the data. For example, one offender discussed how her needs could not be fully achieved, due to an absence of bond:

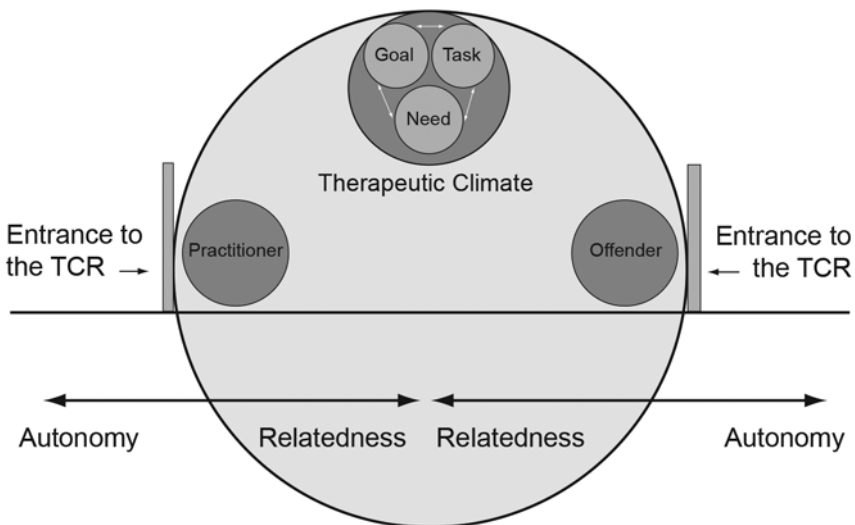


Figure 4.2 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: the application of goal, task and need

I can't talk personal to her, [I] can only talk impersonal, I've spoken to the manager about this because I have got a personal problem, I'm not saying what substance, but it is a substance misuse.

(Sandra)

Others described the importance of practitioner empathy through *understanding* their needs. Andrew stated:

I think he read me correct, I can't explain what to call that, but he read me right and he came across in the correct way. Maybe that's a skill that he has got, like judging how a person is, I don't know.

This can be compared to how Jason (an offender) referred to task through the accurate assessment of need, Jason stating, 'the good ones put stuff in place, trying to keep me as drug and crime free as possible'. Another offender (Paul) referred to goal and need, saying, 'she's always there, she identified my needs for my reoffending ... she puts those goals in place for me'.

While movement seemed to occur within the therapeutic correctional relationship, another space was referred to where there was no bond or 'we-ness' (Luborsky, 1976). With respect to task and goal, it seemed that due to a lack of legitimacy, which was experienced by the offender, such tasks and goals were of little or no value. To illustrate, the two examples below are from different offenders:

It was a tick box. If you can tick a box, so can I. I said what she wanted to hear. I knew what she wanted to hear ... she wasn't interested in anything that was going on in my life or why little things were going wrong ... But it needed to be about me ... I got early revocation because I ticked all the boxes.

(Alex)

Just the way they talk to you ... they give you a bit of paper to sign, come in the next week for a couple of minutes, they don't ask you if you have any problems, health problems, anything ... just in and out, sign a bit of paper and gone.

(Will)

These quotes indicate a distant, apathetic response that could be associated with a technocratic case-management role that focuses upon assessment, rather than engagement. It is suggested that this would not be conceived as therapeutic in nature and could indicate a position that is outside of the therapeutic correctional relationship (see Figure 4.2).

Comparatively, some offenders referred to a positive therapeutic space that was conceptualised with reference to the practitioner's attributes. Tom stated:

‘He spoke to me with respect, he didn’t speak to me like I was an ex-criminal who’s just come out of prison, he didn’t speak to me like that, he spoke to me like a normal person really.’ Another offender (Joseph) stated how the relationship can be a space to talk openly: ‘Getting stuff off your chest and getting your ideas on the table and talking to someone else ... I suppose I can be open with him.’

Legitimacy featured within the therapeutic climate, as well as other climate attributes that were specified in my previous research i.e. respect, honesty, belief/faith, support, acceptance, equality and empathy (Lewis, 2014b). Ross *et al.* (2008) argued that this climate operates within a larger systemic context and that a key characteristic of this system is the operation of power from top-down processes. I suggest that it is this systemic climate which contributes to the key differences between therapeutic relationships and therapeutic correctional relationships, as well as how criminal justice practitioners represent systemic power, a discussion that features later within the rupture results. Further discussions relating to the nature of how systemic power impacts upon the relationship, more specifically, would develop these ideas further, though it is argued that systemic power can shake both players within the relationship, upon its execution by the practitioner, as a representative of ‘the system’. This supports the findings from Ross *et al.* (2008), who highlighted the importance of contextual factors, and reinforces the argument of Marlatt *et al.* (2008), that therapeutic relationships provide a foundation for establishing an atmosphere of trust.

It would also seem (as illustrated in Figure 4.3), that both players need to enter into a place that is therapeutic in nature and ideally be therapeutically supported through broader systems. I argue, in light of my previous work (Lewis, 2012), some aspects of practice, such as administrative tasks and targets, impact upon the flow of correctional relationships and interrupt important processes that can secure a therapeutic correctional relationship. As illustrated in Figure 4.3, the point of entry into the therapeutic correctional relationship (indicated as TCR on the model) is created, whereupon both players decide to enter into a therapeutic climate, to allow the relationship to develop.

The faces of systemic power and visibility

Power featured in all thematic sections of the results, both in terms of the visibility of power and the different faces of power. It was generally recognised that power is inherent to probation as an organisation (and other criminal justice organisations) and consequentially, the role of the practitioner. As identified by Jackson *et al.* (2010), social order can be highly visible within a prison due to the environment. Therefore, how power operates is of great importance, especially when attempting to gain a greater understanding of the mechanisms of correctional relationships. Bruhn *et al.* (2012) explore different climates within different locations of a prison and found that within a special security wing, relationships were observed to be

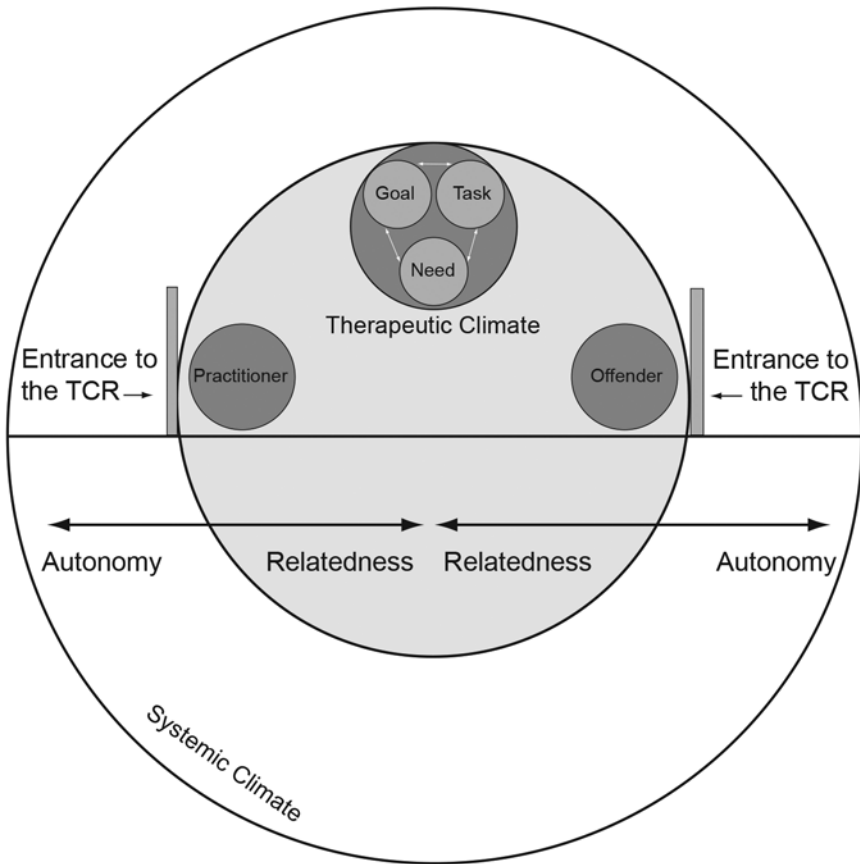


Figure 4.3 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: representing systemic climate

distant and detached. However, within the treatment wing of the prison in Sweden, there was a ‘culture of equality’ (p. 222) and relationships were viewed as more humanitarian and respectful. Further to this, within the treatment wing, receptivity to relationships was greater and there was a more genuine interest in knowing the prisoners. This highlights how power and relationships can vary in visibility within different locations, depending upon the goals that are perceived as important and the subcultures that may exist on a smaller scale. The visibility, or conscious presence of this power, was referred to by all offenders. For example, Gary stated: ‘[The] fact that the probation officer has got power over that person and some people make that known and some people don’t, it is about the way they speak to you.’ Gary went on to discuss power in connection with his current experience:

My probation officer, she has got the power to return me to jail, but you know, there's better ways to go about it and I think they'll connect, a lot better and will get more honesty in people and feel comfortable [if they use power effectively] ... but you've always got to remember that they are probation.

This would indicate that the responsibilities of the practitioner extend beyond that of change agent as the management of risk needs fulfilling. This again highlights a significant difference between therapeutic relationships in their purest form and therapeutic correctional relationships, leaving questions as to how such a role is possible, in light of other responsibilities that are deemed more retributive in nature. And yet, throughout the interviews it emerged that offenders accepted the differing roles and when motivated, were still receptive to a therapeutic correctional relationship. From data analysis discussions, there seemed to be numerous ways power could be used within the context of relationships, both positively and negatively. One offender highlighted the responsibility of the practitioner in creating a climate:

SARAH: How do you see that relationship?

MARK: It doesn't depend on me, it depends on them, how they hold themselves, how they come across.

SARAH: Can you tell me more about that?

MARK: With probation you get some [practitioners] that sort of dominate you and tell you what's what and then you've got others that will work with you.

It appeared that there was a *perceived* differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate presentations of power and considering the contemporary climate, it is not a surprise to see this represented within frontline practice. It could be argued that such an approach is encouraged from top-down systems and yet, this was seen by offenders to undermine legitimacy and their perceived purpose of probation, to support processes of change. This highlights a challenge for practitioners, due to the inevitable use of power, as well as the desire of relatedness through the relationship, in order to address aspects of welfarism. It supports the contradictory nature of contemporary penalty, as discussed by O'Malley (1999, 2009) and suggests that such contradictions may operate on a micro-level as well as macro-level, *between* different practitioners and *within* the same practitioner, at different moments. The work on ruptures highlights these contradictions visibly and these findings suggest that such contradictions leave both practitioners and offender confused and unsettled. On a critical note, while a misuse of power was perceived by offenders, the extent to which this was a reality cannot be confirmed. With respect to Hacking's (1985) work, the offender may have 'made up' and constructed an image of the practitioner and in this sense, particularly cues (i.e. power discourse) may trigger this image, which may then become self-fulfilling.

While systemic power is inherent to any correctional relationship, I argue that this power can be managed effectively and can be accepted more readily within the therapeutic correctional relationship, by some offenders. To illustrate, one offender (Nick) referred to the 'right' of the practitioner to exert such power: 'I saw [named practitioner], she grilled me a bit, but that is down to me and I've had a few blips lately and so she has a right to do that.' While the association between the therapeutic correctional relationship and power is complex, how power is addressed within relationships seems to determine legitimacy. For example, Mark (an offender) stated:

Some of my probation officers have been quite rigid, as in 'if you miss appointments, we're gonna do this' ... 'if you miss that, we're gonna do this', 'it's *you* putting us in that position'. Yeah, they're coming across as friendly, but they are also coming across as almost giving *you* responsibility for your life.

The representation of power was also described within a positive light; as a way in which practitioners could utilise their power for the benefit of the offender. To illustrate, Joseph (an offender) stated:

You've got to be realistic, they can't wave a magic wand and make everything better, but a little bit of help that they do, they normally will try and help you with their power.

Additionally, Phil (an offender) recognised the need for mutuality and perceived equality within relational work:

It is important to have a good relationship with your probation officer, because honestly, they hold your life in their hands. One letter to the courts and you're back in court and you can be sent to prison. But it has got to work two ways, if we are nice, respect them, they should respect us and not look down on us, because sometimes you feel, okay, you're a criminal, we get that, if you want us to move on, don't keep reminding us.

This suggested the need for mutuality and receptivity within the therapeutic correctional relationship as well as indicating that moving forward should be the focus within probation practice, rather than looking back. This supports the ideas around strength-based approaches and how therapeutic correctional relationships might facilitate processes of desistance. It is also observed here that Phil perceived the practitioner as the source of power, rather than the state, highlighting a significant problem within current practice and relationship representation. It is argued that due to this perception, relational work becomes compromised, as the source of power is rooted in the system, though represented by the practitioner. It appeared that the practitioner can remind offenders of the power differentials that exist, though there are instances when

this power is less visible. It fades and it illuminates, moment by moment. This is not to say that systemic power can disappear from the relationship, as correctional relationships operate within this context. What it does suggest is that a practitioner has the control to alter the visibility of power, depending upon their behaviour. While one practitioner referred to power as ‘the elephant in the room’, it became increasingly evident from the analysis and later discussions, that the presence of power varies. This supports the notion of Garland (1990), who suggested that power can serve different functions, though extends the debate in highlighting that it is not only multi-dimensional, but also varies in transparency. Within the principles of core correctional practice, Dowden and Andrews (2004) alluded to the importance to make roles ‘more visible’, through a firm but fair approach that is based on positive reinforcement, rather than domination or abuse. This would indicate that there are multiple ways to manage power in positive ways to develop therapeutic correctional relationships further within practice. Boulding (1989) outlined the notion that power has three faces; the destructive face which destroys; the productive face which creates; and, finally the integrative face, which brings individuals together. It is therefore argued that power cannot be separated from the therapeutic correctional relationship, though it can be *presented* separately within practice (as discussed in the next section). While power may become more visible when put into action, it is not suggested that power can be removed from the relationship completely and due to the positive aspects of power, this may not be necessary or desirable. Rogers (1967) described ‘real’ encounters within the therapeutic relationship and highlighted that practitioners must enter the relationship without the comfort, of what Thorne (1992) described as, ‘a protective cloak of professional authority’. I propose that this is the component of the therapeutic relationship that cannot be fully achieved in therapeutic correctional relationships, in light of the systemic power that exists. It is of interest here that within a correctional context, practitioners are operating within the same systemic climate, yet managing and representing power in different ways. Further research to consider what impacts upon such power representations (e.g. schemata, values and characteristics) would develop this work and determine how power can be effectively managed, when it needs to be made visible.

Moving on, the power of the *offender* was also highlighted within the context of correctional relationships. The following sections of transcript highlight how offenders used the relationship to meet their own needs, through more unhealthy means. It is argued that these preserved the offender’s autonomy, operating on the outskirts of the correctional relationship and contributed to a more superficial relationship, rather than a therapeutic one. These captions from different offenders also highlight the implications in assessing offender risk and how the focus of risk can be altered and controlled by the offender, if they so choose:

You can't walk straight into probation and say 'can you look to find me a place [to live]?' It's taking the mickey a bit, you've got to work up to that, play it crafty, bide my time and then when she's in a good mood, I may ask her, I might go into some greater depths about certain things.

(Joseph)

It just made me feel like she was interfering and it didn't make me want to be honest and it didn't make me want to tell her things.

(Gary)

Most of them I could just do what I wanted, I would generally know within a couple of visits, whether I can get away with it.

(John)

I may not be as willing to come forward with participation at group events or giving [information], or painting all of the picture, so it may look like a very blurred photograph of reality, rather than a clear snapshot of maybe certain parts of my life.

(Mark)

These statements imply that in order to assess risk and gain an accurate picture of the offender, the positioning of both players is important. If the players are too close, as they seek relatedness, this can lead to collusion and an unhelpful focus on bond and need, which consequently leads to a depiction of knowledge which is clouded. Comparatively, if the players are too far away, as they refuse to engage or enter the therapeutic correctional relationship, knowledge about the offender is blurred through the offender's account of their lives, which may be duplicitous due to a lack of trust (see Figure 4.4). It is therefore proposed that there is a therapeutic frame (TF) to the therapeutic correctional relationship, which can be illustrated in Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6. These figures demonstrate how the component of risk can be incorporated within the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships. The therapeutic frame exists between two boundaries across three spaces, to differentiate between (1) collusion (represented by over-involvement or misuse of power through passivity), (2) inclusion (represented by the therapeutic climate and mutuality) and (3) exclusion (represented by under-involvement or misuse of power through dominance).

In light of this, I propose that there is a third space, where boundaries are loosened and offenders perceive their practitioner to be that of a friend, instead of a professional. To illustrate, one offender (Gary) stated: 'So you start getting friendly with somebody and you know a little bit about their life, like where they live ... because you become friends.' Further investigation into this collusive aspect of correctional work would benefit these discussions further and gain a better understanding of this aspect of correctional

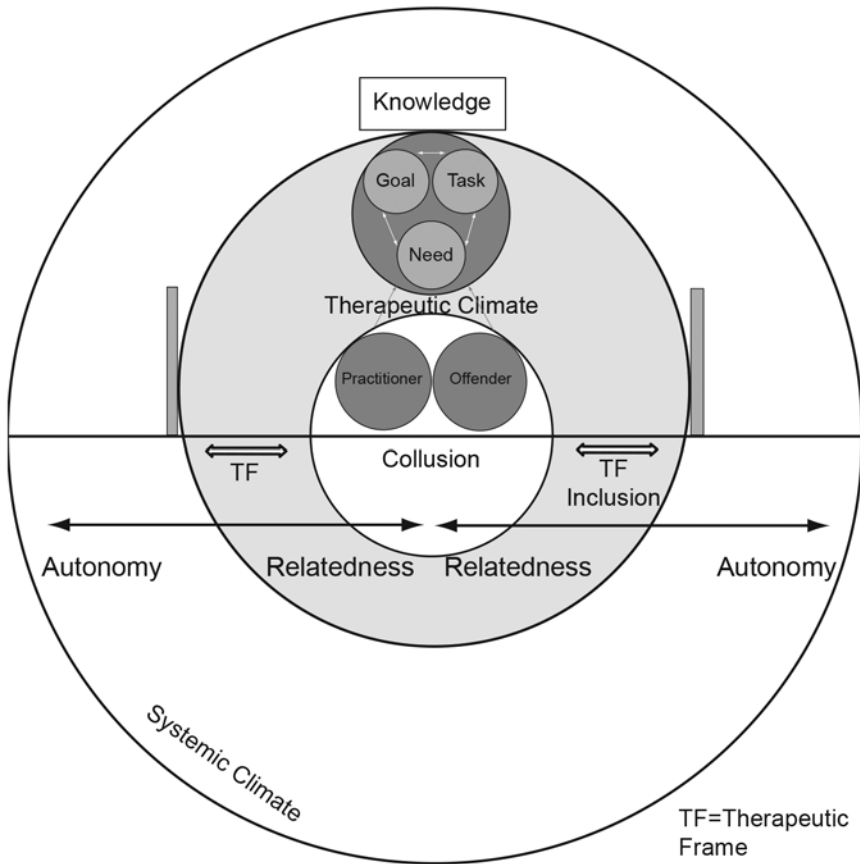


Figure 4.4 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: a representation of a collusive position

relationships. While Sparks *et al.* (1996) argued that mutual identification can sometimes become collusive, the balance between maintaining boundaries and being ‘friendly’ is complex. Within the context of prison, Crawley (2004) argued that being ‘friendly’ assists with the smooth running of the prison, though becoming too close can threaten security. Liebling (2008) and Liebling and Price (2001) also recognised that some relationships can get too close and highlighted the importance of maintaining professional boundaries within a prison context. Crewe and Liebling (2012) later distinguished between the overuse of authority and presented the notion that there was a dark side to prison power. This use (or misuse of power) may lead to exclusionary practices and the movement of prisoners away from building positive and important relationships with officers. Creating a balance between a collusive or overly authoritarian position is challenging to maintain and Crewe and

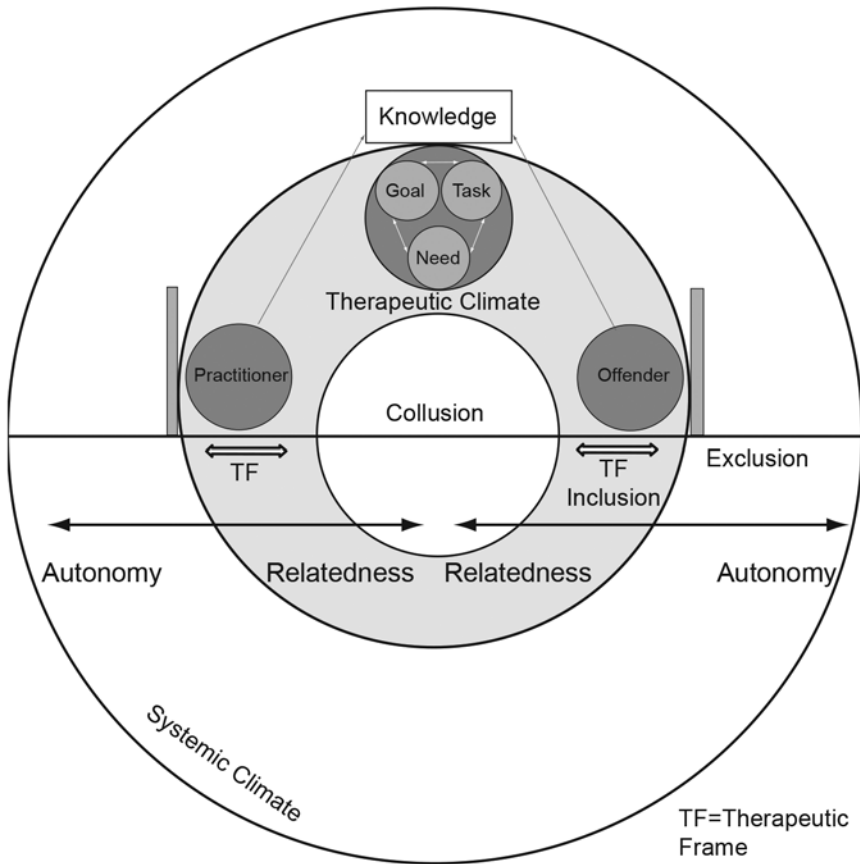


Figure 4.5 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: a representation of an inclusionary position

Liebling (2012) indicate that these are two inherent dangers of prison work. This also suggests that similar relational processes exist between probation and prison work that could benefit of further exploration in the future.

It is argued that this model highlights one of the reasons why collusion may jeopardise security, as knowledge is out of focus and bond and need becomes central. Further discussions relating to inclusion and exclusion will be developed throughout this chapter to provide further justification for this claim. How an inclusive position is achieved, both on an interpersonal level and organisational level is of particular important and Baldursson's (2000) work in an Icelandic prison offers some suggestions of how this may be achieved. Baldursson's (2000) work referred to the need to transfer 'different' prisoners, which may have more complex needs (and more entrenched relational

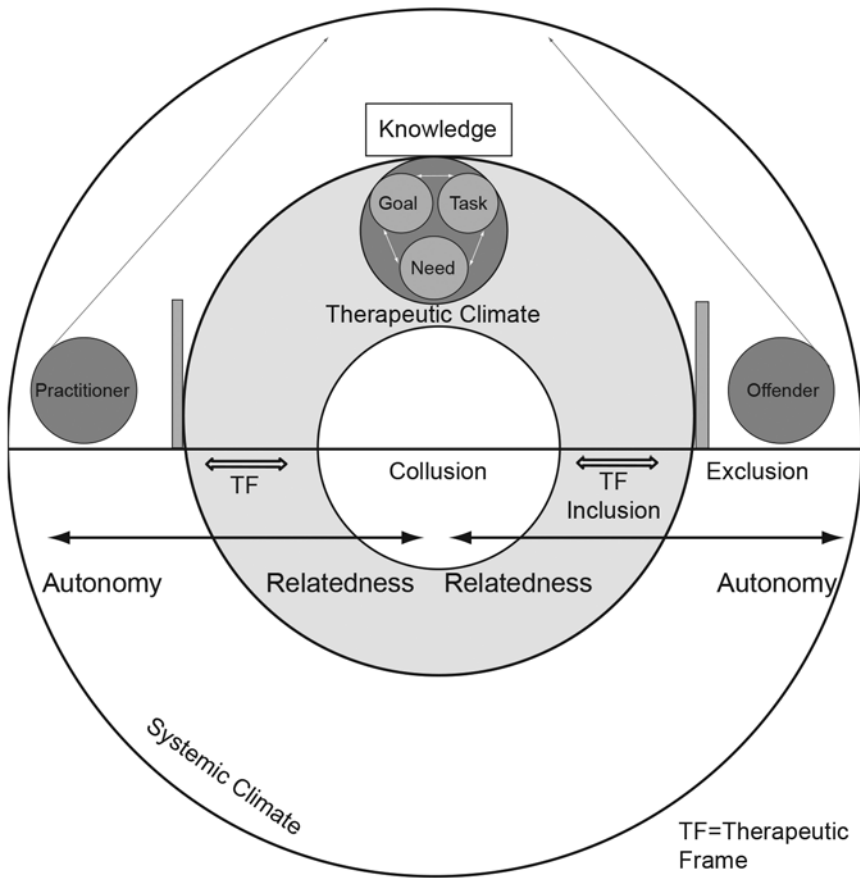


Figure 4.6 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: a representation of an exclusionary position

schemata) into smaller institutions. This would not only allow work to be more individualised and personal for the prisoner, but promote greater visibility to the problems that a prisoner may experience within a relational context. This is certainly at odds and contradictory to the recent approaches within penal practice in the US and England and Wales, to increase prison capacity and promote the notion of mass incarceration under the guise of populism and neo-liberalistic ‘value for money’ mentality. Instead of encouraging such a view, greater legitimacy could be sought if governments promoted the successful impact of smaller institutions, supporting the notion that providing climates of change (rather than toxic environments) are more conducive to offender rehabilitation.

The role of therapeutic correctional relationships in facilitating other processes

The importance of effective positioning within the therapeutic frame seemed to be linked to other processes, especially that of desistance. During an analysis session, one offender acknowledged that a offender's understanding of the therapeutic correctional relationship is largely influenced by whether they have the motivation to address their problems and offending behaviour. Gary stated:

It depends what you want out of it, if you don't want nothing out of it and you just want to scoot through it, you are trying to manipulate the system, then yeah, of course, it's great, fantastic ... But if you actually want something out of it [the relationship] and you want to change your ways, then it's [the outcome] absolutely terrible, it's appalling.

This aspect of readiness was featured in Ross *et al.*'s (2008) work and reinforced that relationships evolve over an offender's life-course, based on their motivations. The following quote highlights a possible transition that was experienced by an offender:

PAUL: My relationships have changed quite a lot. I haven't gone out thieving no more, I don't do drugs, I ain't doing drink. I'm listening to people more, my behaviour is changing because I never used to think, I used to just jump in and do things, but now I'm looking at things in a different light and realising what's right and what's wrong.

SARAH: Why is there a change do you think?

PAUL: Just by the way people are putting things in place for me and just looking at it the other way and thinking they're there to help me ... To be honest like, [named practitioner] is the same, she said to me 'everybody do change' and I think, it's my turn to change.

Other offenders reflected on past identities and approaches to the correctional relationship, for example:

JOHN: I have had some probation officers that I have spun on my finger and I've written loads of self cert [certificate] forms. I wrote ten in one probation, one lot of probation! I just kept writing them in and they kept accepting them. And when it's easy like that, then, when I get a stiff one or a tough one, I think shit!

SARAH: Looking back on it, how do you see it?

JOHN: Looking back on it, I would rather someone like [named practitioner] to tell me what to do and check on me and all that, then maybe I could of got clean years ago.

This illustrates that therapeutic correctional relationships are not purely determined by what the offender wants, but more so, what the offender needs. The process of desistance featured within the offender's accounts and it became increasingly evident that relationships influenced transformative processes. For example, one offender (Peter) said that: 'He tries to put you on the right path'. Another stated: 'He kept me on the straight and narrow' and 'they make me a better person'. McNeill (2012) highlighted the difficulties in separating and deconstructing notions of rehabilitation and it is similarly suggested that therapeutic correctional relationships are impossible to disentangle with respect to other processes, such as desistance. If practitioners are mindful of their position and encourage the pushing and pulling of the offender, I propose that this may support other processes that are at play. It should be noted here that offender movement is ultimately controlled by the offender. We cannot move offenders, only exert pressure. This work is congruent to Barry's (2007) discussion relating to the 'reciprocal' relationship within probation practice, as she suggested that relationships may not be a 'major catalyst to desistance, but are seen very much as a pull factor ... in the desistance process' (p. 418). Comparatively, Liebling (2005) argued that driving and resisting forces (discussed also as headwinds and tailwinds) operate within a prison context and stated that relationships and rapport were identified as tailwinds, when identifying what was important within a prison context. This would suggest that this research may apply in similar ways to other relationships that are co-constructed, though it is acknowledged that systemic climate would be different between correctional contexts. This would support the notion of Liebling *et al.* (2011), as they revealed that the utilisation of power differed, depending upon the prison they examined. This point highlights even further complexity, as the representation of power may differ between organisations and even different practitioners within those organisations.

To conclude, it is suggested that if correctional practitioners can utilise their skills authentically, offenders may be encouraged to move into the therapeutic frame. If this is achieved, I propose that need, task and goal can be collaboratively addressed and risk can be more accurately assessed through gaining *knowledge* of the offender. Consequently, this may increase the likelihood of change processes occurring that may contribute to desistance. Further work to examine *how* these constructs operate within relationships would continue to develop an understanding of the mechanisms of therapeutic correctional relationships.

While it is acknowledged that some practitioners may not wish to strive for therapeutic correctional relationships within their practice, the benefits of such relationships are significant. Through focus group discussions, practitioners recognised how rewarding therapeutic correctional relationships were and the degree of satisfaction they experienced from supporting processes of desistance could be felt in the room. This work has also indicated that creating, what Charles (2000) would call a 'therapeutic milieu', may increase the possibilities of relationship to flourish and significantly influence the flow of

relationships on broader systemic levels. Further work in revealing additional benefits of these relationships would strengthen the rationale for therapeutic correctional relationships and continue to promote greater investment in relationships in the future on both macro and micro levels.

Notes

- 1 Similar to Hill and Knox (2014), the term 'therapeutic relationship' will be used to 'refer to the totality of the interpersonal field' and will include the 'therapeutic alliance.' These terms are used interchangeably within relational work and a single point of reference is used to avoid confusion and add clarity.
- 2 'Experienced' referred to offenders that had been in contact with probation for over ten years.

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5 The journeys of correctional relationships

This chapter will examine the flow of relationships over time and help to provide some understanding into how criminal justice practitioners can develop therapeutic correctional relationships and safeguard them within practice. As we have established, relationships are fluid and changeable over time, and yet the relational journeys between offenders and criminal justice practitioners have been significantly neglected within the research. It is generally assumed within practice that relationships are either 'good' or 'bad', 'present' or 'absent' and from critically examining any interpersonal relationship, it is clear to see that they do in fact ebb and flow over time, changing with respect to the individuals involved and the context in which they are situated. When situating therapeutic relationships within a correctional setting, a number of challenges occur that can shake the relationship. This may include further offences, offenders moving area, or practitioner changes due to sickness or relocation. While practical issues can unsettle a relationship, more subtle aspects of practice can also alter the nature of a relationship. This chapter will also address the relational narrative to consider relationships more broadly over time and attend to the occurrence of ruptures, drawing upon more specific events that can temporarily tear a relationship between offender and practitioner. This chapter was dedicated to two key themes that specifically examined the narrative of relationships within probation practice. It not only explored how offenders and practitioners described their relationship narratives, but also identified elements of good practice that could maximise the likelihood of relationship success and retention. This chapter has been structured in two parts; firstly, it will address how therapeutic correctional relationships can be developed and then go on to explore how relationships can facilitate growth, once they have been developed successfully. While the relational narrative is documented within the fields of psychotherapy and nursing, limited research exists relating to offenders. By drawing upon a more multidisciplinary perspective, it is hoped that the mechanisms of therapeutic correctional relationships can be illuminated and a discussion can take place that establishes the extent of such application. Russell and Schau (2014) highlight that by exploring narratives and providing individuals opportunities to tell their story, it can lead to new insights into the inner self and assist an

individual in understanding themselves and their past experiences. This chapter aims to use narratives in a way that can provide an insight into the processes of relationships and provide participants with the opportunity to attend to their own stories and make sense of past and current relationships.

It has been highlighted by Beeber *et al.* (1990) that the stages of a relationship are not time anchored and can evolve over different periods of time, depending upon the individual players. In response to this, the stages of therapeutic correctional relationships will be critically explored under the broad headings of; preconceptions, early stages (including the first meeting), the working stage and the latter stages of resolution/termination. These were themes that emerged within the academic literature and also reinforced through my own work. The academic literature relating to these stages will be discussed and where present, the behaviours or skills of the practitioner will be outlined, in order to explore the avenues in which criminal justice practitioners can successfully develop positive relational narratives. While these findings can be tentatively applied to other areas of rehabilitative practice, further research relating to relational narratives is necessary to ground such assertions.

Consistent with the work of Ryals (2011), the main stages associated with a therapeutic correctional relationship were broadly described by both offenders and practitioners as:

- 1 relational preconceptions;
- 2 the first meeting;
- 3 developing the relationship;
- 4 maintaining/sustaining the relationship (the 'working' relationship); and
- 5 ending the relationship.

It should be noted that these stages do not necessarily capture the 'reality' of relationships (due to their non-linearity), but were utilised within this project to understand relational processes. It was found that within the two separate focus groups, these stages were defined almost identically and this was further supported through discussions with offenders, prior to the interviews. During the interviews, all participants seemed to show an understanding of these stages and this agreement was reinforced throughout the research phases. With respect to time, it was also recognised by both practitioner groups that the occurrence of these stages were not anchored (except the first meeting), but varied in duration, reflecting the arguments of Beeber (1995). This was illustrated by a practitioner who noted that relationships with offenders took several months before 'something clicked', with another practitioner (Michael) explaining that; 'You may be going in circles with them for a few sessions and then you may get a breaking point with some honesty, and with that comes respect.'

On an observational note, practitioners seemed to depict their relational narratives in greater detail compared to offenders. This supports the work of Nagy *et al.* (1998), who stated that practitioners may be more aware of the

more detailed processes, such as ruptures. It should be noted that the same offender and practitioner relationship were not examined and a direct comparison was not the objective of the visual or the research. On a reflective note, the visuals were used differently by practitioners and offenders and their relational realities seemed to be constructed in a number of ways. While a practitioner attended to their emotions during the relational narrative similar to that of an offender, they also seemed to be more aware of the offender's behaviour and this may account for the finer details observed here. Conversely, offenders seemed to construct their narratives in relation to their own experiences, rather than focusing upon practitioner behaviour during the narrative. The findings suggested that a therapeutic correctional relationship does not always 'arrive' but instead, can become a negative experience, as highlighted in my previous research (Lewis, 2014).

Part 1: Building a therapeutic correctional relationship

Preconceptions of the correctional relationship

It would seem that numerous variables impact upon the practitioner and offender, prior to the first meeting. Within nursing,¹Forchuk (1994) and Peplau (1952, 1997) argued that the preconceptions of the nurse can influence the latter stages of the working relationship and subsequent development of the therapeutic relationship. Similarly, within psychotherapy, Safran and Muran (2003) referred to preconceptions that can be determined by prior expectations and previous attachments, which colour future therapeutic relationships. How an individual sees their own relationships are important here, as they form a basis, or blueprint for all other relationships. Within a correctional context, Lewis (2014) indicated that offenders' past correctional relationships influence the way they interact in subsequent relationships with their probation officer. This can be linked to forms of attachment and Bowlby's work (1988), which suggested that early relationships with significant caregivers can influence later relationships, thus creating a blueprint for future bonds. When applied to corrections, Ansbro (2008) highlighted the importance of creating a secure base for an offender within correctional relationships that will increase the likelihood of positive change, through the development of a healthy bond.

Ryals (2011) acknowledged that relational preconceptions can impact upon the offender's views and feelings relating to the practitioner, the relationship in general terms and how young offenders especially perceive their ability to benefit from the intervention. While this stage within the relational journey is documented by Ryals (2011), it was not elaborated upon significantly. Further to this, attention has been paid to the offender or client, and their attachment styles, while less attention has been given to how the practitioner's attachments may play a role in securing a positive working relationship. Currently little is known about the nature of preconceptions and how preconceptions

shape a practitioner's view of an offender and the impact this may have on their behaviour. By carrying out research into the practitioner's role, the black box of relationships can be explored and developments can be made as to how practitioners can recognise and reflect upon such preconceptions.

Within psychotherapy, Safran (1990) argued that relationship schemata can determine how clients² may initially act and relate to a practitioner. Safran (1990) highlighted the importance of recognising schemata and exploring these with their clients, arguing that this may avoid the possibility of entering into a negative interpersonal cycle and schema confirmation. Ross *et al.* (2008) recognised that while some advancement has been made theoretically, little work has been carried out regarding the practitioners' or offenders' ideas or emotions during this stage of the relationship. It was an aim of my research to uncover such mechanisms and shed some light on these areas, considering realistic and appropriate expectations that practitioners can use in everyday practice.

In support of Ross *et al.* (2008), Forchuk, (1994) and Safran and Muran (2003), relational preconceptions on the impending relationship, were evident in my research data. One practitioner (Joel) stated: 'Before going into the first meeting, that first reading, rightly or wrongly, I come up with an image and on that first appointment, that image gets shattered, or it develops further.' Another practitioner (Sophia) said; 'It [the offender's file] can give you an insight into what type of relationships they have had with probation officers before ... you are forming a lot of opinions before you ever meet them.' One practitioner (Judy) discussed how predetermined judgements can assist with the development of the relationship, stating that:

You get a preconceived idea based on the written information you read beforehand. It may be true or false, but you make some judgements prior to meeting them ... so if they have poor compliance in the past, if they have got history, you might think 'instead of sending them a letter, I will ring them' so you are making a judgement on how to proceed.

While some practitioners only referred to how it shaped their ideas around offenders, others demonstrated a more critical stance, with an appreciation of movement and a lack of focus on the full picture. One practitioner (Andrew) stated with respect to pre-sentence reports: 'It can be skewed ... it is a difficult one ... I don't think it gives you a gauge of where they are at that moment in time.' Another practitioner (Charlie) highlighted the danger of anchoring such preconceptions and commented how expectations around the offender can be self-fulfilling. Offenders also described this process from their perspective. Phil stated:

She judged me by the file, she had read the word 'firearms' in the file and straight away, she pinpointed that and said; 'Right!' [*confrontational tone*] ... How can I put it, she made assumptions, she thought because I

had that sort of thing on my file, that I'm this big dangerous guy that would do anything ... She made assumptions and didn't sit down and find out who I was. She just went straight for the file and got it.

Another offender (Jason) stated plainly: 'I think before they meet me, they see that criminal record, so they broadly build up a picture already.' This would support the notion of Hacking (1985), and how both players 'make up' each other, as a way of classifying imminent relational experiences. In view of these preconceptions, it was inferred by both players that a relational preparation period is required, where practitioners can prepare for a therapeutic correctional relationship. Particular sub-themes emerged from the focus groups, though offenders referred generally to the need to be open-minded and non-judgemental. Practitioners outlined the importance of reminding themselves of humanistic factors, which supports the arguments of McMurran (2002). For example, Andrew (practitioner) stated the importance of: 'Seeing them as a person, you can be closed-minded if the offences are bad.' Others discussed the strategy of identifying similarities between oneself and the offender, in order to improve the likelihood of forming a bond and recognising the humanistic qualities of the individual.

An awareness and acknowledgement of relational assumptions was also highlighted from the discussions with practitioners. Joel (practitioner) stated: 'You read [the file] and take it on board, but don't make too many assumptions ... it is only one sided, you don't know the situation now.' Another (Andrew) said: 'that person is in a very different context, it is skewed'. Mindfulness was discussed inadvertently by the practitioners, through the attention of 'here and now' feelings. Georgina (practitioner) stated that by: 'Being aware of your own emotions, you build up an image in your head ... you have to recognise how you feel about the person and the offence.' This would endorse the work of Day and Ward (2010: 300), who stated: 'therapists need first to be aware of exactly what their values are in relation to crime and punishment in general and to different types of offence'. Additionally, Maruna (2012) discussed the importance of an 'injection of hope', to maintain practitioner belief and relational preparation could be one of the many 'injections' that builds hope and optimism, prior to meeting the offender. One practitioner (Sophia) stated: 'Look at what we can achieve', Karen (practitioner) added; 'Look at the successes and foundations you can build on', a third (Richard) answered; '[It is about] looking for their assets and resources.' In conjunction with humanistic strategies, one practitioner (Holly) also discussed the importance of separating out behaviour and the individual; 'Believing everyone can change ... Your behaviour does not define who you are.' These findings chime with the work of both Rex (1999) and Appleton (2010) and are closely linked to accepting the offender as a person, creating a separation between the individual and their behaviour. While this may seem obvious in light of probation's welfare-focused identity, the consistent inappropriate use of power seemed in some instances all too tempting for some

practitioners (as discussed within the findings on ruptures). Similarly, such values and beliefs may be echoed within a prison context, or other rehabilitative setting such as with community rehabilitation companies. I argue that due to the contradictory nature of correctional work and the practitioner's position within a punitive climate, contradictions on a micro-level are inevitable. In light of political and systemic restraints, the humanistic qualities that form the basis of probation and rehabilitative services are under threat and could be lost, at great cost. As Feeley and Simon (1994) stated: 'The new penology not only has trouble recognising the cultural investment in the figure of the criminal, it has trouble with the concept of humanity' (p. 173). I argue a humanistic approach is challenged as free markets thrive within England and Wales, with competitive relationships undermining collaboration. Where the therapeutic correctional relationship sits is therefore of great significance. How relational work will operate in the future is unknown, but it is argued that in addition to the contradictory nature of penal practices (O'Malley, 1999, 2009), there is also a level of irony. For, if a 'relational revolution' is achieved (Weaver, 2012), it is proposed that results will emerge that will sustain processes of positive change. I argue that, instead of promoting short-term outcomes, a sustainable society is embraced that focuses upon long-term investment and reintegration.

It would seem that, similar to Ryal's (2011) work, preconceptions of the correctional relationship exist and impact upon practitioner behaviour. Further work to investigate the pre-existing relational representations that both players form and hold would increase the knowledge in this area. To address inevitable preconceptions, the need to be open-minded, mindful, hopeful and critical were identified in the data, as a way of *preparing* for the therapeutic correctional relationship. This may increase the likelihood of practitioners feeling fully prepared for a therapeutic correctional relationship and receptive to a therapeutic correctional relationship, prior to meeting offenders. This movement into the therapeutic frame can be illustrated diagrammatically, as represented in Figure 5.1.

The early stages of the therapeutic correctional relationship

Eaton *et al.* (1988) stated that the practitioner's contributions at the initial stages of a therapeutic relationship are crucial to the success of that relationship and the therapeutic outcomes (Rogers, 1967; Gelso and Carter, 1985; Eaton *et al.*, 1988). The early stages of a relationship can be characterised in numerous ways and includes the first meeting between practitioner and offender. This is considered to be a particularly significant event (Morgan *et al.*, 1982; Ryals, 2011) and Eaton *et al.* (1988) argued that significant changes occur during the first two sessions between a practitioner and client and beyond this point, there is less variation. Similarly, Castonguay *et al.* (2006) proposed that during the first three meetings, a therapeutic relationship is most likely to develop. Gelso and Carter (1985) acknowledged that if a

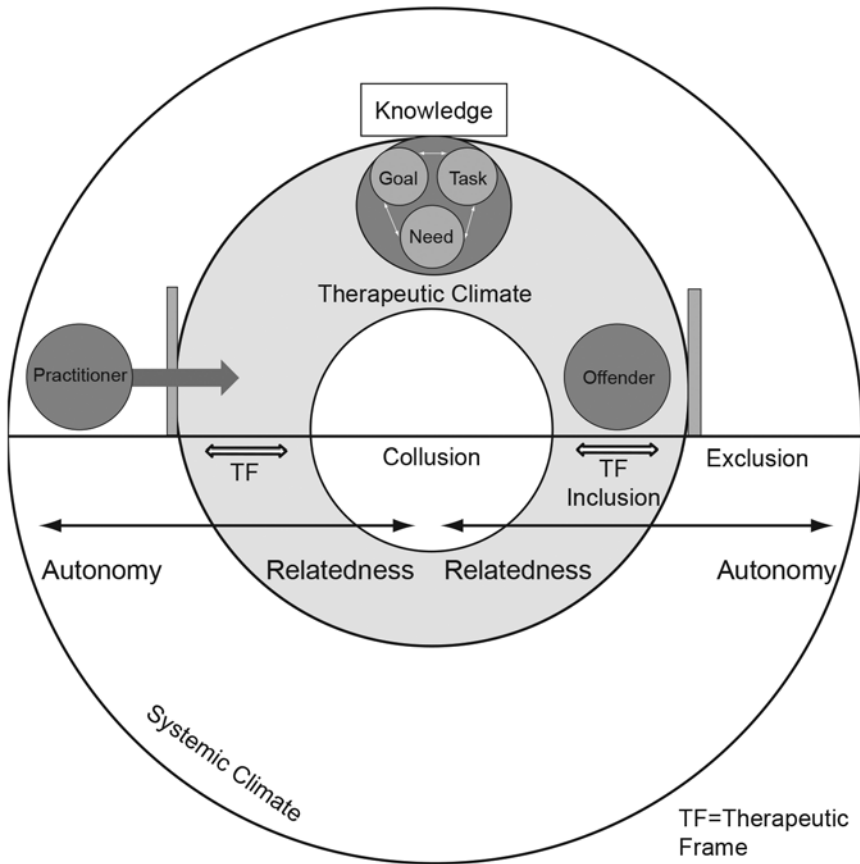


Figure 5.1 The movement of the practitioner into the therapeutic frame (TF), in preparation for the therapeutic correctional relationship

therapeutic relationship is not formed during the early stages of therapy, a poor outcome is assumed. At this point, it is imperative that a sufficient level of collaboration and trust has been established that is ‘good enough’ (Ross *et al.*, 2008), in order for the offender to join the practitioner in the ‘therapeutic journey’ (Horvath and Luborsky, 1993: 561). Through the work of Bordin (1979), this may include establishing an agreement of goals with corresponding tasks, a therapeutic connection or bond and a development of faith on the success of such tasks. This suggests that particular judgements have been formed in a relatively short space of time, regarding the workable nature of the relationship. Morgan *et al.* (1982) proposed that such clinical wisdom can occur immediately within the first session between a client and practitioner, though referred only to the practitioner’s ‘wisdom’, not that of the client. During these early stages, Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993)

acknowledged the importance of the client accepting the practitioner, as this influences the degree to which agreement is established, specific to the goal of the treatment.

Horvath (2005) detailed how the quality of agreement is forged through a caring and trusting approach, which can lead to a more collaborative position. Prior to this work, Luborsky (1976) highlighted the importance of the client perceiving the practitioner as supportive. This is later acknowledged in Horvath and Luborsky's (1993) work, who stated that at these early stages, the client may question the caring nature of the practitioner. They discussed how the perceived level of warmth and care, as well as the client's relational schemata and preconceptions, may influence relational receptivity (Luborsky *et al.*, 1985). From a criminological and philosophical perspective, Hacking (1985) considered the notion that through the use of categorisation, individuals are constructed and these categories alter in accordance with social change. As discussed earlier, he referred to the process of 'making up' and suggested it was two-way, stating: 'The idea of making up people is enriched; it applies not to the unfortunate elect, but to all of us ... we are not only what we are, but what we might have been' (p. 168). This would indicate that preconceptions are constructed by both the offender and practitioner through the use of applying old labels. In this way, we are making sense of one another. Sparti (2001) extended Hacking's (1985) ideas and hypothesised that identity is a formation process, that is fluid and changeable, defining identity as a set of social categories that classify, adapt and re-identify. Sparti (2001) proposed that these representations can be transmitted both between individuals and more broadly through whole societies. These views hold significance within correctional relationships in respect to how the processes of identity formation (and transformation) are altered and adapted through social interactions and processes of labelling. It begs the question: if practitioners are 'making up' an offender, how might this process influence or shape the offenders identity? This research aimed to examine whether such constructions occur and consider how they operate, if they are a socially constructed reality.

Within nursing, Peplau (1997) outlined an orientation phase whereupon the parameters of the relationship are established and where trust, respect, acceptance and honesty are focused upon by the practitioner (McKlindon and Barnsteiner, 1999). During this time, there is an expectation exchange and the relationship should be discussed and clarified (Peplau, 1997). Listening and consistency were also considered as important by Forchuk (1994) and Sundeen *et al.* (1989), in order to seek understanding of the client and reduce the anxiety that they may experience during the early stages of the relationship. Within a correctional context, Ryals (2011) highlighted that a therapeutic correctional relationship between a young offender and practitioner was developed through listening, empathy and respect. Ryals (2011) also recommended that in light of the emotions that may be present during the first meeting (i.e. anxiety, confusion or uncertainty), practitioners were encouraged to engage in low-risk conversations that reduce the demands on

the offender and eases tension. This may include discussions around travelling to the meeting, general topics such as football or simply the weather.

Within correctional work, Bonta *et al.* (2008) observed that hostile and unfriendly behaviour at the early stages of supervision can ‘turn off’ the offender. It would appear that this stage is crucial for the success of a therapeutic relationship within nursing and psychotherapy and lessons can be learned and applied to the context of corrections. Skills such as listening, empathy, support and respect have been highlighted as specific facets of the relationship across disciplines, as this contributes to a more collaborative stance. In this sense, such virtues are trans-theoretical. It would also appear that within a short amount of time, the client and practitioner make important decisions about their relationship, with regard to its usefulness, possible role and importance.

This research project explored whether the initial meetings within a correctional setting are described in similar ways and what guidance practitioners and offenders might recommend at this stage, to increase the likelihood of relational development. From the research findings, the first meeting was specifically identified within the relational narrative, as it was considered to be of great significance. During this time, a significant amount of movement seemed to occur for both players. Attention was drawn to the beginning and end of this meeting with Charlie (practitioner) stating: ‘An important part is the state they leave’; Richard (practitioner) highlighting: ‘What they [the offender] disclose when the meeting is over, what they tell you, what they say by the door about the real problems, what’s really going on for them [is important].’ Practitioners also suggested that they liked to ‘finish on a high note’ by ‘giving them empowerment ... you are looking ahead and trying to get something positive, no matter how hard it can be’. Again, this could be considered as a way to inject hope, to increase legitimacy and increase the likelihood of future engagement.

Both players referred to this meeting as a period of assessment. Sophia (practitioner) stated: ‘There is a lot of assessing going on, their learning styles, their motivation, what makes them tick, how you could possibly challenge them productively.’ Comparatively, offenders seemed to follow similar processes of assessment and made particular reference to a ‘sense’ of relatedness. During the analysis phase, an offender referred to this as ‘copper’s nose’, which he defined as a way an experienced police officer can ‘sense’ different things about an offender. Some found this ‘sense’ difficult to convey through language, other used phrases as below.

Within two minutes, I knew the kind of person they were, by the vibe they gave off.

(Alex)

I felt just at home, it just clicked, within the first few lines that she spoke; we were quite compatible ... it was down to the first line, whether their

tone was high or low, or just natural, and she was just natural and I just thought it'd be a nice relationship.

(Steven)

We connected.

(Mason)

While Morgan *et al.* (1982) highlighted that during these initial moments of the relationship, clinical wisdom occurs for the practitioner, I argue that this is also the case for experienced offenders, who assessed their officer with respect to legitimacy and compatibility. Irrespective of experience, it was the case that an initial assessment by both parties occurred and influenced the movement of each player.

A further theme that emerged related to the initial establishment of a therapeutic climate. This included the practitioner's demonstration of respect and belief in the individual, as well as helping the offender feel at ease. It became evident that offenders felt varying degrees of anxiety prior to the first meeting, describing their emotions as: 'fearful', 'nervous' or 'anxious', as offenders explained there was a lot 'at stake', especially if they did not relate to the practitioner. Reducing these feelings seemed vital to the success of the first meeting, and the practitioner's ability to provide a climate, in which anxiety could dissipate. Practitioners discussed this in general terms, stating: '[You need to] discuss their concerns ... put their minds at ease ... understand their position' (Richard). However, during the offender interviews, I was personally moved by the level of anxiety that was experienced and the importance of creating ease. Alex (offender) described this:

As they started talking, it [anxiety] lowered, do you know what I mean? ... by the end of the first meeting, it was gone. I was able to talk ... If I was unable to talk in the first meeting, then it wouldn't have got anywhere ... I felt instantly relaxed ... if you don't get that one right (points to first meeting on visual) you won't get any of them right. You've got to get rid of that [*points to visual where it states 'anxiety'*] in your first meeting.

Another offender (Nick) stated: 'I felt so comfortable with her, I only just met her and it does take me a bit of time to be able to open up to them ... it was just the way she came across, she just tried to make me feel that way.' Jason (offender) tried to explain the practitioner's behaviour that helped this process:

The way they carry themselves, the way that they put themselves across, first impressions, putting someone at ease because that's what's important, because that first meeting with your probation officer, you know

instantly whether you will get on with them, whether you can open up to them, that's what I've found.

Other offenders discussed initial negative experiences that may 'turn off' the offender, as described by Bonta *et al.* (2008). Phil described this as: 'The way she spoke to me, she spoke to me like I was a criminal.' For others, there was the desire for respect: 'I'm talking to someone with respect, then I expect it back and respect is one of the main things for me' (Mason). One offender (Peter) described how much he valued the respect he was given in an initial meeting:

He was just really down-to-earth and called me by my first name ... just a really positive thing and I thought, 'he ain't that bad' ... from the introduction, really, just really friendly, he shook my hand and he said: 'how do you do, mate?' And I said, 'I'm doing all right', just very respectful.

The demonstration of belief was also evident from the results. Sophia (practitioner) stated: 'It is about the how, not if; how we can work, not if we can work with them.' This statement signified the level of hope this practitioner felt, which was evidenced by comments from offenders such as: 'His heart was in the right place' (Jason). This belief was indicated by the practitioner's behaviour, Alex (offender) stated plainly:

Whatever you are reflects to other people ... The way they talk to you, the way they listen, their attention, their eyes. They're not just looking at a piece of paper, they're having a conversation, actual eye-to-eye contact, that's the difference.

This could be compared to a negative experience of Alex that was outlined during the interviews: 'She was just reading from the book, she didn't want to find out anything about me, it was a straight: "you've done that", not "why have you done that?", but "you will do this" and "you will do this" and that was it.'

While most offenders suggested that they make an initial decision to engage in the therapeutic correctional relationship within the first meeting, it appeared that those with negative representations of authority, took a little longer. Mark (an offender) described his experience:

MARK: I was sort of cagey, yeah, it was cagey for both of us ... [I] thought she fed off me because I was being cagey ... because of my past experiences and then I'm sure it was the second meeting I came in here and we started chatting and we sat here for at least an hour and a half, just chatting, it was very easy, very comfortable and I was thinking, how nice is that.

SARAH: What do you think made it like that?

MARK: I'd say she cared, she actually cared.

This suggested that while the first meeting may be significant, it is not the case that if something does not 'click', hope should fade. It is argued that the value of persistence during this time is of particular importance as, similar to desistance, the path to a therapeutic correctional relationship is challenging. The virtues of perseverance and commitment seem to be of particular importance to those that may have issues with trust. Mattinson (1975) argued that within probation practice, *constant* practice is important and the refusal to let go is a demonstration of this.

Legitimacy was a prominent theme throughout the relational narratives and was discussed at this stage. First, it was acknowledged by practitioners on a broad level that offenders need to accept and enter into the therapeutic frame. By doing this, Michael (practitioner) stated: 'They need to give you permission and accept what is on offer.' To achieve this, both players referred to, what could be imagined as hooks of legitimacy which promoted buy-in.

The notion of hooks have been discussed by Bottoms and Shapland (2011) as factors that influence the progression towards desistance, such as a change in social capital or an alteration in individual disposition. In a similar way, hooks of legitimacy or hope are ways in which practitioners can attempt to influence an offender in moving towards them in order to relate. It is proposed that numerous hooks exist that encourage legitimacy, including collaborative language, boundary clarification, rapport building, legitimate challenging and consultancy. To illustrate, one offender (Alex) outlined this: 'You got to make it worthwhile, you got to offer them things, you've got to understand and listen, instead of instructing them ... it don't work.' Mason recalled the words of his practitioner: 'She said: "I've got a plan for you"'; also, Steven (offender) stated: '[He] wasn't looking at the negatives, he was looking at the positives and how we can move on from that.' It is interesting to note here that while these statements may be presented as a hook of legitimacy, it also suggests that 'we-ness' was a possible consequence of this hook. A further hook seemed to refer to offender-centred practice, instead of offence-centred practice. One offender (Alex) stated: 'Within two minutes of seeing her, she is an ideal person ... easy to talk to, actually wants to know about me, not so much about the offence, but about me ... what makes me tick.' This may create some tension for the practitioner as they battle between focusing upon individual need and assessing risk thoroughly. However, I propose that by developing a therapeutic correctional relationship, an individual's risk and need will be identified more accurately and readily, due to an engaging relationship that seeks to understand.

Another hook that featured was the process of highlighting the benefits of probation and what was on offer. To illustrate, one offender (Jason) outlined that: 'She said I would get a lot out of probation.' Another commented: 'She said "you've got to do this, this, this and this, but keep me updated and I can help

and I'm here if you need me'" (Nick). Practitioners also discussed ways in which they could promote buy-in at this early stage. Michael (practitioner) stated:

You have got to find common ground, somehow, even if it means a bit of google-ing to find out what they are into [like football], you can always fall back on that in a discussion, even if it goes wrong in a session ... it just gives you something to fall back on.

An offender (Alex) seemed to echo the importance of this hook:

Yeah, because you need to find their interest ... If you find their interest and you base what you're doing on that one interest, it doesn't matter what it is, football [for example] ... and if you can work your lessons into something they're interested in, you're talking about something that they want.

The use of collaborative language seemed to promote legitimacy and improve the agreement of task and goal, as specified by Bordin (1979). One practitioner stated during their first meeting: 'You have an agreement together.' Another practitioner (Karen) referred to the use of collaborative language (e.g. 'what might *we* want to achieve during this order?'). The understanding and acknowledgement of offender need seemed to indicate a sense of collaboration and greater legitimacy. To illustrate, one offender described how his practitioner had listened to his anxieties and acknowledged the significance of them, in light of his past behaviour. He stated that it was the first time he had shared his emotions with a practitioner and recognised the value in her response:

She hasn't got me doing no groups or anything, just gradually doing it, bit by bit, building me up to two more things instead of just whacking it on ... it's just too much, I can't deal with it ... I told [named practitioner] on that first appointment, I can't handle all these conditions or I will be back in prison within weeks, I can't have it, it's too much stress on my head and she said 'I'm not going to do that with you.'

(Will)

It was also highlighted how climate may promote legitimacy, as well as the collaborative discussion around offender need:

SARAH: How quickly did you know you and [named practitioners] were going to get on?

PAUL: Straightaway.

SARAH: What made you think that?

PAUL: The atmosphere and the way that *we* were speaking and that.

SARAH: Can you describe it to me?

PAUL: It is just the way she approached herself and what sort of needs I had ... where I'd like to change and like, in the past, no probation officer has ever done that before. So she's given me a list of things for me to do and that list of things is working ... it was really different, because [named practitioner] said: 'Your options are here, if you want them, and if you want to change, then you need to do these courses.'

From this last statement, it suggested that skills in negotiation and consultancy were of significance for Paul. While previously, he stated that he had not 'bought in' to courses, the approach stated above seemed to provide him with greater motivation, as he perceived the practitioner to be legitimate. Due to the nature of community orders, there is little room for negotiation and yet, *how* sentence requirements are branded to an offender may be of importance, in light of systemic restraints that promote rigid practice. An explicit distinction could be made within practice to outline which aspects of correctional supervision can be negotiated and which are fixed. The relationship, in its purest form, may be one of the aspects of practice that has room for negotiation, whereas systemic power needs careful clarification. Clark (2005) discussed these challenges and concluded: 'I believe the ability to create and maintain a helping relationship – so essential to the spirit of motivational interviewing – can only be realized by placing the "big stick" with others' (p. 25). I argue that through role clarification of the practitioner *and* the system, therapeutic correctional relationships are more likely to emerge. Role clarification becomes increasingly important in rapid organisational change and uncertainties are likely to exist within the current context, if this is not addressed.

In connection to power, the promotion of autonomy also emerged within the findings. To illustrate, one offender (Gary) highlighted a similar approach: 'She invites you to get involved as much as possible ... she puts the ball in my court.' It seemed that there was a process by which practitioners could present a number of hooks to encourage legitimacy, though I would argue that in order for an offender to move into the therapeutic frame, the offender needs to accept what is on offer. Georgina (practitioner) referred to this as, 'You set the boundaries, you set the expectations, but then they may not turn up for the next session or attend ... you have to see what they do with those boundaries and that impacts on the relationship.' This would suggest the importance of establishing clear and inclusive boundaries from the beginning of the relationship, which includes the 'acknowledgement of the imbalance of power' (Charlie, practitioner). Sophia (practitioner) discussed how this process can be achieved effectively, based on her past experiences:

It is a powerful question to ask them what they expect from us. By doing that you are highlighting that we are people like them and we need to respect them, this can make them more accepting.

Offenders also described how boundaries can be established mutually, as a way to promote legitimacy, Ashley (offender) stated: 'In the first meeting he

said “You be straight with me and I’ll be straight with you”.’ Another offender (Gary) commented: ‘He tells you what’s expected, but he does it in a soft way ... he also said: “if you’re fifteen minutes late, then I will wait for you”, and if he’s fifteen minutes late, then I will wait for him and I thought that was quite nice.’ It would appear that respect is two-way and without it, offenders were more likely to walk away of the relationship. One offender (Will) said:

I’ve had quite a few probation officers where I have made my mind up in a couple sessions, just thought, no, I’m not going to bother with them, if they’re not going to bother with me, I’m not going [to appointments], even if it does put me in a situation where I would go back to prison. It is a stupid idea, but I just think, I’ll do my licence, get it over and done with and that’s it.

It would seem that within the first three sessions, the therapeutic correctional relationship is likely to be activated or not and this is influenced by (though not limited to), the practitioner’s approach. As discussed shortly, practitioners can anchor themselves within the therapeutic frame and contribute to the anchoring of an offender, once they have entered also. Anchoring can be described as a way in which a player is weighed down to reduce the amount of movement within the relationship. Practitioners can do this through collaborative working, injections of hope and reflective practice. Hooks may be used to encourage offenders to move into the therapeutic frame, though they could also be used to anchor offenders to this position. As discussed within the results relating to rupture resolution, processes of unhooking may also serve this function. It is argued that in the same way that practitioners encourage the anchoring of offenders, once they have entered into the therapeutic frame, anchoring can also work against the practitioner. A consistent observation from the offender interviews related to how some with very entrenched views regarding authority (and its legitimacy), can be anchored outside of the therapeutic frame. It is therefore suggested that if a practitioner promotes inclusion, creates ease through active listening, clarifies role, as well as establishes hooks of legitimacy and demonstrates belief in the relationship, then a therapeutic correctional relationship is more likely to emerge. This is not to say that these attempts will result in the movement of an offender into the therapeutic frame, though through persistence and hope, it is argued the chance of success is greater. Further work in this area would certainly increase our understanding of how legitimacy operates within this therapeutic correctional context. In light of the individualistic nature of therapeutic correctional relationship, it is proposed that different hooks may be needed for different people, at different points in their life. Training therefore needs to be focused upon providing a flexible approach that supports practitioners in this complex task. This flexibility should aim to embrace the notion of individualised theory building and consider principles of relational practice, rather than standardised theories that focus on a one-size-fits-all approach. Promoting

clinical artistry, as discussed by Hollin (2002), would support practitioners in effective and sustainable experiential learning, utilised through reflection. In view of the rapid organisational changes within criminal justice, it is argued that within future training, such principles are introduced to practitioners prior to practice and are continuously developed through an experiential approach. In order for this to be fully achieved, criminal justice organisations would be required to adopt more structured support for newly recruited staff in order for pro-social values to be developed. It is also suggested that prior to training, the recruitment of practitioners is examined in order to employ individuals that demonstrate skills that could promote the practitioner's rehabilitative responsibilities.

In reference to the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships, at this stage in the relationship, it is suggested that, first, the practitioner anchors themselves within the therapeutic frame through 'injections of hope' (Maruna, 2012), making their position robust and secure. This may include mental or emotional preparation, collaborative working and reflective work. Second, as indicated in Figure 5.2, the practitioner encourages the movement of the offender (through 'pulling'), into the therapeutic frame through a variety of ways.

Through these two processes, it is suggested that the practitioner is more receptive to the relationship and the offender moves into a position, where a therapeutic correctional relationship can form. It is acknowledged that two corresponding challenges exist, which need to be addressed by practitioner, offender and senior management; either player to move and the motivation of the resources or capacity to do so. It is hoped that, for the engaged practitioner, a collaborative and persistent effort may slowly de-anchor the resistant offender. Within this instance, senior management need to actively support the practitioner, through reflective opportunities, in order to maintain the hope of the practitioner. For the disengaged practitioner, a collaborative and persistent effort needs to be taken by senior management, through observed practice and support, to address the reasons why a practitioner may not wish to enter into the therapeutic frame.

Developing the therapeutic correctional relationship

This section discusses the data relating to the period shortly after the first few meetings. Aspects of legitimacy and climate were highlighted as important, though the data indicated a deepening of legitimacy and the emergence of *mutual* legitimacy and trust. When discussing this period with practitioners, there seemed to be indicators that suggested that a therapeutic correctional relationship had arrived. To illustrate, Judy (practitioner) commented: 'When you are not just the one talking, when there is two way respect ... the balance is equal between you.' Another (Georgina) stated when: 'both parties accept the relationship, they are signing up to it ... they buy into it and what it involves'.

There also seemed to be a moment when the practitioner's approach to challenging shifted, as the relationship deepened. During the initial stages,

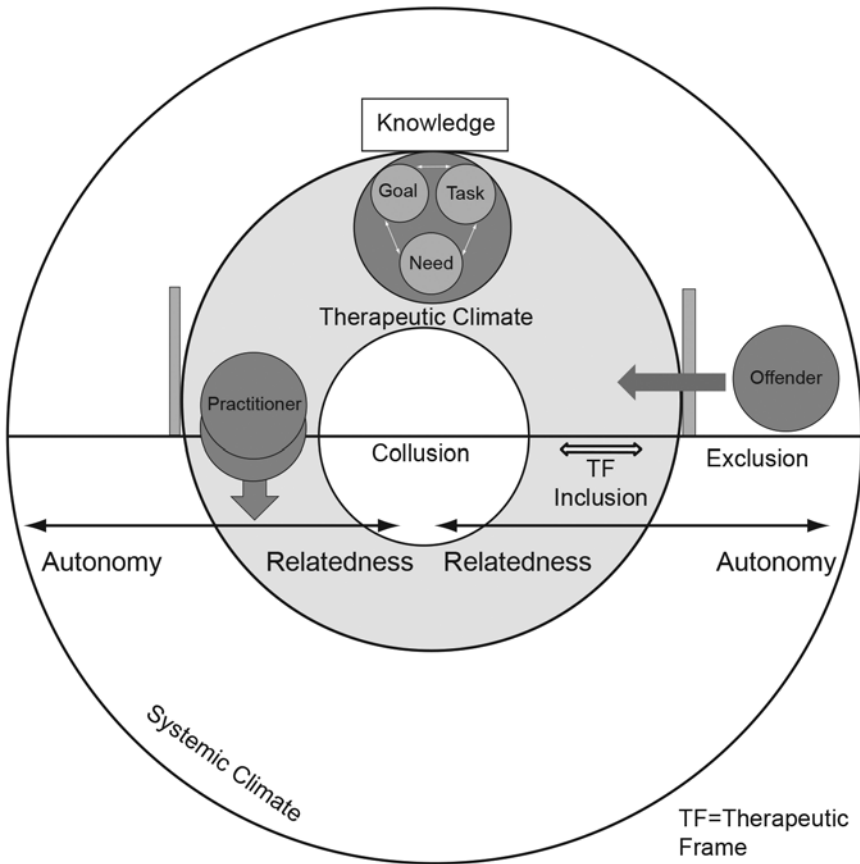


Figure 5.2 The initial stages of the therapeutic correctional relationship: The possible anchoring and movement of the players

practitioners indicated that challenging took a more indirect, curious approach, which may include rephrasing, for example. This may be less threatening during this fragile time and indicate to the offender that they are being listened to. One practitioner (Karen) stated: ‘You don’t go in challenging straight away.’ There seemed to be a specific time when challenging became more direct, Georgina (practitioner) stated: ‘They are happy to take a challenge, but you may have challenged them early on, but they weren’t ready for that ... the relationship makes challenging easier.’ This is aligned to my previous work (Lewis, 2014), which indicated that once a relationship is accepted and a climate of change is created, challenging moves away from a more threatening position to a ‘pro-social push’. This would also support the notion of adopting low-risk conversation during the establishment of a therapeutic correctional relationship, which was discussed by Ryals (2011), in his work with young offenders.

The development of a therapeutic climate was discussed in great detail during this stage. Trust was perceived as important in constructing this climate and can be examined through two comparative statements made by different offenders:

[I] go to a job interview with a potential new employer and say, hold on a minute, can you write me a letter to prove to my probation officer [I have been here] and then they think ... 'why should I employ you, if your probation officer thinks you're a liar and needs evidence? Why should I write you a letter? Why should I write you a reference, when I've got four other candidates who don't have any of this hassle?'

(Phil)

If I found a job or had an appointment down the job centre, he said 'Give me a ring, make sure you give me a ring and we can change the appointment, just don't not turn up.'

(Ashley)

It is clear that these practitioners are positioned differently, with respect to relational receptivity. One practitioner is indicating through their actions that they have mutual legitimacy for the offender, while the other is positioned further away from the offender and does not trust them. It is suggested that legitimacy of the offender at this stage may hold some significance, for a therapeutic correctional relationship to develop.

Traits linked to legitimacy and climate included honesty, as John (offender) elaborated:

If they start telling you bullshit, it ain't worth doing anything is it? You know if they tell you straight up, you can do this, you can't do that, it's easier. He [practitioner] does, he just tells me 'you can go here, you can go there, you've got to do that'.

Other aspects of climate that were particularly important included trust and respect. The following caption first indicated a hook of hope that is described within the first meeting, and then, how the offender is beginning to trust his practitioner. In respect to Will, it should be noted that he had never completed an order or licence with probation, during the 15 years that he had been in contact with the service.

WILL: I got [named practitioner] and she seemed all right, like she wanted to help me. She said: 'I'm going to get you through this licence' and I said 'I've never got through a licence before' and she said 'by hook or by crook, we will get you through this licence.'

SARAH: And what did that say to you?

WILL: It just gave me a bit more confidence in myself.

SARAH: Was that in the first meeting?

WILL: Yeah, yeah, it was in the first meeting.

SARAH: And how quickly did you know you would get on well with [named practitioner]?

WILL: Just by attending the appointments ... and attended, attended, attended, haven't missed one appointment and *we* have gradually built up a relationship and I think I can trust her a little bit. Even with coming today, thinking I could be picked up by the police. She didn't come out until ten to three and I was thinking 'here we go again, coming through the back'. [the offender is referring to a planned arrest at the office]

These findings demonstrate that relational formation can take time, and yet through perseverance, negative relational representations can be unhooked and a positive relationship can be nurtured.

A final aspect of the therapeutic climate that was referred to was that of mutuality. One offender (Jason) stated: 'He doesn't make me feel like a criminal.' Another commented on the visibility of power in light of this mutuality: 'He don't show that he's in charge, it is on a mutual level, instead of him coming in and saying "You did this, you did that." Instead *we* both get a bit of it, do you know what I mean? It's not all about him.' This was strongly linked to the importance of listening during this stage of the relationship, as identified by Ryals (2011) in his work with young offenders. One offender (Mason) explained simply: 'He listened, that's all it was. I listened to him, he asked a question and that's where it went off, he listened to me and I listen to him.' Nick (offender) argued that the benefits went beyond the relationship, stating: 'Having an opportunity to talk, I think that's important in terms of staying out of trouble.' It would seem that the processes of listening and talking not only developed the relationship, but did this in different ways. Nick referred to it in terms of his needs: 'I need people to talk to really on quite a regular basis because I need reassurance that I'm doing alright.' Another commented: 'It helps me get things off my chest' (Joseph). The aspect of legitimacy arose within this complex mixture of different constructs. One younger offender recounted:

He acted professionally towards me and listened to me. Listening is a big part of it, because where I got a short temper, I kick off if people don't listen, I kick a stop and that, but [named practitioner], he just listens and he sorts out what *we* need sorting.

(Mason)

The language used here indicated that listening does not only promote the development of a relationship, but builds on other qualities, such as legitimacy, which feed back into the relationship. This would correspond with Bryan's (1998) ideas that there may be multiple pathways to a similar outcome, and strengthened the notion that relational processes are dynamic in nature, with

multiple parts and inputs. In this sense, the practitioner must make up or construct a climate, using key ingredients. Due to the possibility that an offender may experience multiple therapeutic correctional relationships at one time (e.g. probation officer, police officer, drug worker, programme facilitator), it is difficult to establish what relationship (or what elements of the relationship), contributes to behavioural change. This poses a great challenge with respect to how payments by results may be calculated, in light of the processes of 'pulling' and 'pushing' the offender in different directions. For example, positive relational experiences may be operating with some rehabilitative interventions, while these may be undermined by other aspects of practice elsewhere.

The assessment of individual need, through listening, was recognised by all participants, though there also seemed to be a development of a sense, with respect to practitioner expertise. To illustrate, Nick (offender) stated: 'She's got a knack of reading me and she's always had good advice.' It is argued that this sense of expertise promoted the likelihood of legitimacy formation within the relationship, though it also extended to the practitioner, as an individual. A couple of offenders commented that they felt their practitioner had a past of criminality, Tom stated: '[I] got that impression, that he was an ex-criminal, because of the way he was.' While it was not possible to confirm whether this was the case or not, it demonstrated that a previous experience of offending may be of value, within a relational context. A number of offenders commented that they would like a practitioner who had 'been there', as they perceived this as more legitimate. How this would operate within a correctional context may differ, depending upon the organisation, though mentors have been an increasingly popular initiative under the last Coalition government and have remained in practice under the new Conservative government to date. Whether mentors could in fact replace practitioners is an interesting debate as a possible third player would alter and impact upon the relationship between practitioner and offender if these were added to the mix. As mentoring programmes are evaluated, it will highlight the value of such initiatives and how they could be integrated more fully within correctional practice in the future.

Hooks of legitimacy were also discussed within this stage of the relationship, though offenders seemed to refer to a proactive approach of 'keeping promises' (John, offender). While hooks could be used at the initial stages of the relationship, there was value in addressing what had been offered to promote buy-in. One practitioner (Michael) commented: 'It is important to follow things up ... if they feel let down by you, you have lost them.' Practitioners noted that it was important to be realistic with respect to what they can offer and to clarify to the offender, which resources they can access. John (offender) discussed the first therapeutic correctional relationship he had:

It was something new, because I never used to tell the probation officer anything, I don't really now, to be honest. I tells them some things, but

not much. I think it is where she said that she would do something and she did it.

This implied that through a proactive approach, the development of a relationship can create pathways to other therapeutic outcomes, which are conducive to change. In relation to a proactive approach, offenders discussed the importance of realistic promises, as disappointment was described as leading to frustrations and disengagement. The necessity to set expectations is of particular importance during organisational change, as resource availability varies, depending upon negotiations with rehabilitative companies.

These results suggest that at the initial stages of the relational narrative, collaboration or embarkation on a joint venture (or 'journey': Horvath and Luborsky (1993: 561)), is an important aspect of this stage. While Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993) highlighted the importance of the client accepting the practitioner, it is argued that this is two-way and that there is also a process of acceptance on behalf of the practitioner. The results reinforced previous work, which described a therapeutic climate as respectful, supportive, empathic and trusting (Horvath and Luborsky, 1993). Further work is required to gain greater understanding of this process, with respect to what inhibits and what promotes the flow of therapeutic correctional relationships, through the building of legitimacy and collaborative practice.

Part 2: Working in the therapeutic correctional relationship to facilitate change

In the event that the therapeutic correctional relationship is successfully developed, the aim is now to turn our attention to how deeper relationships can facilitate personal growth and sustain long-term desistance.

Working/latter stages of the therapeutic correctional relationship

It is hoped that as the early stages of the relationship ends and a relationship is secured, a deeper stage of the relationship evolves, that has been described as a 'working' relationship (Forchuk, 1994; Ryals, 2011) or the latter (Luborsky, 1984) stage of the relationship. During this time, Luborsky (1976) highlighted the emergence of 'we-ness' and collaboration on a deeper level. He proposed a shared sense of responsibility and a joint struggle, which infers commitment from both parties. Gaston and Ring (1992) argued that at this stage, old patterns of thinking are challenged, as support and sympathy are reduced, in order to promote new learning. Within nursing, it is interesting to note that during the working phase of the relationship, intervention occurs. Within a probation setting, it seems logical that a deep relationship is developed prior to interventions to allow the offender to have a legitimate relationship they can utilise throughout their order. However, practitioners are

pressured to refer to other organisations in order to fulfil the requirements of the community order or licence conditions in good time. This hastiness could lead to a relationship between the practitioner and offender that is not anchored or deemed 'good enough'.

Sundeen *et al.* (1989) recognised that resistance may be attributed to a lack of change, something that could be a potential strain in the relationship. Safran *et al.* (1992) claimed that it is likely that ruptures will occur at this stage and the successful repair of ruptures is vital in order to achieve further growth. With respect to correctional work, this can be linked to the work of Bonta *et al.* (2008) and my own research. Bonta *et al.* (2008) highlighted that practitioners experienced difficulties with challenging offenders' negative behaviour during supervision, but recognised the importance of challenging behaviour in order to promote change. Within my work, the ability to effectively challenge antisocial behaviour was regarded by offenders as important, as it highlighted the opportunity to address old ways of thinking and replace them with more effective alternatives (Lewis, 2014). This type of challenge, defined as 'pro-social push', was characteristic of the mature stages of the therapeutic correctional relationship. It is therefore argued that similar to the work of psychotherapy, the *placement* of challenges may impact upon how an offender may listen, react and adapt to the challenges that are proposed by the practitioner. In my previous research, offenders proposed that a specific climate (based on empathy, belief/faith, respect, honesty and acceptance) was necessary in order for 'pro-social push' to be successful and conducive to change (Lewis, 2014). When negative correctional relationships were discussed, in the absence of a therapeutic correctional relationship, offenders viewed challenges by the practitioner as negative and were more inclined to interpret them as an abuse of power as opposed to a 'pro-social push'. This is not to claim that challenging negative behaviour should not occur at the earlier stages of a relationship, but rather the *way* in which challenges occur may require further attention. To challenge effectively, Horvath (2003) highlighted the importance of practitioners promoting mutual reflectivity, discussing the relational processes in the 'here and now', believing this to be more appropriate at the mature phases of the therapeutic relationship.

This research aimed to illuminate if such a reflective approach is justified and appropriate within probation practice and how this may relate to other correctional settings. From the data, the process of maintaining or sustaining the therapeutic correctional relationship was highlighted by both participant groups for the first time. As Lauren (practitioner) put it: 'There is no pulling in different directions.' While it was initially understood as a relatively stable process by all participants, it was recognised by practitioners that adjustments needed to be made, in light of changing need and/or events (e.g. a relapse).

It was felt that this stage of the relationship was not recognised as important within probation practice, as both players referred to it as 'routine'. However, in light of the data, this was also a place for growth and a time that presents unique challenges. For example, practitioners referred to the

problems associated with the invisibility of power and boundaries, as the relationship develops positively. Concerns around collusion were discussed within both focus groups, and the problems surrounding complacency. Charlie (practitioner) noted: ‘You may have to interrupt the relationship to remind them of your role’, implying a separation of role with the relationship, as previously proposed. Practitioners discussed how complacency can create problems and distort indicators of risk, in order to maintain the relationship. The reiteration of boundaries were discussed within both focus groups, with Charlie (practitioner) stating: ‘I think it is about being honest with them that we wear two hats, we are there to support them but we are about social control as well ... I think it is important to talk about it.’ The focus on honesty and transparency did appear to be an important aspect at this stage and in light of the results relating to ruptures, this approach is well justified.

The data indicated that the promotion of growth could be achieved in numerous ways and that a two-sided approach significantly contributed to the success of this stage. To elaborate, it was deemed important to deepen challenging, as well as maintain engagement, through hooks. Put simply, it was about ‘pushing’ as well as ‘pulling’, though if only one aspect occurs, it could lead to exclusion or collusion respectively. The deepening of challenges was referred to by Georgina (practitioner) as: ‘push em’ (the offender). Practitioners acknowledged that during this stage, offenders should be encouraged to have a voice and speak honestly, one offender (Mark) identified this, stating: ‘I think it’s just about being honest with people, your probation officer is honest with you and you are honest with them.’ Feedback was also recognised as important during this time. Adam (offender) stated: ‘It is important to let them know if they are doing well.’ Another commented:

PAUL: I’ve had rocky parts on the way ... like drugs and drink and relationship problems and money issues and things like that and that is having a big impact on things, but I’m still overcoming them.

SARAH: And how is she (the practitioner) dealing with those things?

PAUL: She’s just talking to me and reassuring me.

This would support the ideas of Farrall *et al.* (2014), who proposed that probation may have an indirect influence of assisting desistance as a way of aiding the offender’s own actions and decisions and allowing them to exert their own agency over their lives. There seems to be a fine line between providing opportunities to relate, and providing the offender with space to make their own decisions and exert their own autonomy.

A further aspect that was considered important during this stage by both participant groups was the need for deeper collaboration. This seemed evident in the use of ‘we’ within the discussions from offenders and the trend that emerged, relating to the relationship as a place for learning. These findings were in line with the work of Gaston and Ring (1992), who argued that old patterns of thinking and maladaptive relational schemas are challenged in

greater depth, at this stage in the relationship. This learning appeared to occur through talking and the practitioner's approach. To illustrate, Jason (offender) stated: 'He [the practitioner] would ask me a lot about me and about my family and my friends ... he took the kind of teacher role with me, he tried to school me and that had quite an impact on me.' Jason referred to his current probation officer within this discussion: '*We* just talk to each other and he listens. I come in and he says "How are things at home?" And we come up with some solutions and I go off and I listen to what he says ... he shows me.' Another offender (Mark) described how his practitioner had created a balance between relatedness and autonomy and stated: 'He tries to give you responsibility, but keeps an eye on you at the same time, he done it really good.'

Offenders also discussed the importance to being kept 'in the picture' during this stage and acknowledged the importance of being given the 'heads up', with respect to their sentence and goals. As well as challenging behaviour, support and encouragement were also expressed as important to the offenders, which could be identified as hooks of hope. This included the advocacy of offenders during this period of the relational narrative. To illustrate, Will (offender) stated:

WILL: I've never had a probation officer do that before, to phone me up, tell me what's going on, keep in contact, say that she's going to try and keep me on probation. I've never had that before. Normally it's just breach and that's it.

SARAH: Has that had an impact on you?

WILL: Yeah, yeah, now I feel that I don't want to let her down in a way. I had a bit of a lull and thought: 'I've just got to get through this little bit.' I think it will be all right ... I was thinking about not going [to probation] anymore and then I sort of heard in the background, her saying: 'it's going to be all right, it's going to be all right' ... and for some reason, I think it is going to be all right.

This supports the notion of Luborsky (1976), who proposed that due to greater relatedness, the two players within the therapeutic relationship embark on a 'joint struggle', which demonstrates mutual commitment. The shift in perspective was also significant to this particular offender, who had spent a great deal of his life on probation or in prison and had not completed an order. Links can also be made to the literature relating to desistance and how movement, with respect to identity and motivation, is shifting. One practitioner (Sophia) highlighted this as a characteristic of this particular stage, in the relational narrative:

You see a moment, invariably, their perspective changes, it is looking forward instead of back, they look back on stages of their life and we encourage them in looking forward, based on the skills they have developed ... positive changes seem to take place at the same time.

A hook of hope could be identified here with respect to the skill of practitioners encouraging movement. In view of this, it is argued that this stage of the relational narrative is similar to the 'working' phase of a therapeutic relationship, which is identified by Luborsky (1984) and Forchuk (1994). Fitzsimons and Kay (2004) argued that relational discourse needs to infer collaboration and commitment, as well as perceptions of closeness, or as Safran and Muran (2003) described, relatedness. The findings would suggest that a deepening of the relationship should be encouraged at this stage, where challenging becomes more direct. By creating this balance, it supports the process of anchoring the offender within the therapeutic frame. It would also seem that while hooks of hope through advocacy are promoted within practice, there is also the process of unhooking maladaptive behaviours and thoughts that might impede processes of desistance and a shifting in identity. In light of resources, organisational restraints and contextual differences, it is proposed that probation training initially focuses upon acceptance, listening and reflective work, before embarking upon more complex relational training. Furthermore, practitioners need to be fully supported to embrace a more therapeutic culture within criminal justice agencies, in order for such ventures to hold legitimacy in their own right.

With reference to the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships, the movement of both players should, ideally operate within the therapeutic frame as indicated in Figure 5.3. This 'pushing' and 'pulling' action is believed to promote change and contribute to growth. It is suggested that this is particularly challenging for the practitioner as too much 'pulling' could lead to collusion and too much 'pushing', could lead to an exit from the therapeutic frame. While this illustrates an ideal snapshot of this stage in the relational narrative, the occurrence of ruptures (as discussed in Chapter 6) inevitably disrupts this ideal, causing greater variance and potential threat. It is also suggested that similar movement of the practitioner occurs as a response to the offender, as the therapeutic correctional relationship evolves and deepens.

Terminating the therapeutic correctional relationship through resolution

Hall (1997) described how the resolution phase of a relationship is based upon the processes of mutual understanding and the celebration of achievements that have occurred. Within Hall's work (1997), this process was described as 'packing for the journey', a term that suggests independence and the process of equipping oneself for the challenges ahead. Hall (1997) outlined that during this phase, the emotions surrounding the end of the therapeutic relationship need to be addressed, as there may be feelings of loss, as the relationship comes to an end (Sundeen *et al.* 1989). Furthermore, Sundeen *et al.* (1989) highlighted the focus upon increased autonomy that should be explored and discussed, prior to the end of the relationship. Within psychotherapy, Knox *et al.* (2011) and previously, Marx and Gelso (1987),

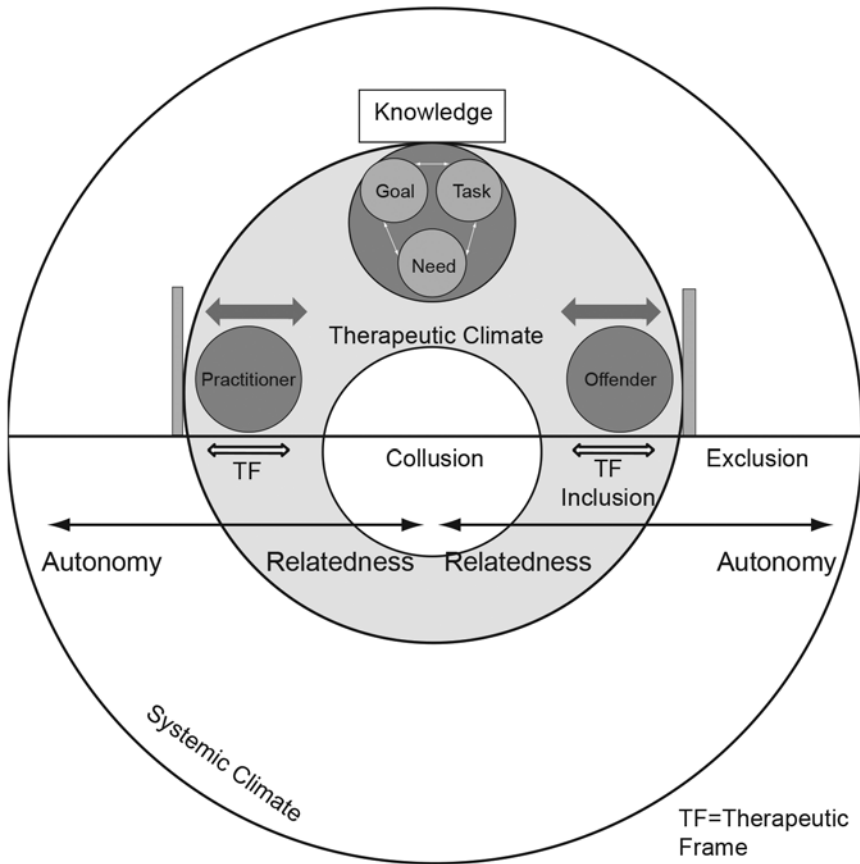


Figure 5.3 The ideal movement of the players at the working stages of the therapeutic correctional relationship

recommended the need to discuss feelings relating to relationship endings and plan endings in some detail. This is deemed by Gelso and Woodhouse (2002) as a collaborative effort and Knox *et al.* (2011) acknowledged the powerful nature of this process, as it is a period where growth can be celebrated and negative emotional reactions can be discussed. Quintana (1993) saw this time as an opportunity for growth, where hope and confidence is instilled in the client, as they move to embrace their independence (Knox *et al.*, 2011). Applying these ideas to correctional work presents numerous challenges. First, within a therapeutic setting, endings can be negotiated and clients are more likely to be equipped for such endings, in light of the positive outcomes in therapy. Within correctional work, endings occur regardless of readiness or the degree of success, as orders are time-bound by the court. This leaves the practitioner and offender in a difficult position, particularly if it is assessed

(by either party) that ending the therapeutic correctional relationship is not appropriate from a rehabilitative perspective. Knox *et al.* (2011) also recognised the negative reaction that can occur during this time, as a client may begin to feel anxious, regarding the impending termination. Emotions such as loss, feeling overwhelmed and sad may all be associated with this period and more so, shortly after termination. Similarly, within my research offenders discussed how they experienced feelings of loss and sadness, one stating that they felt 'empty' and that something was 'missing' from their life (Lewis, 2014). How relationships end is therefore perceived to be of great importance within correctional work, as such emotive responses, if unaddressed, may have negative consequences for the offender. Ryals (2011) noted in his work with young offenders that some therapeutic endings brought anger for the offenders, as well as feelings of hurt and loss. He described endings as 'bittersweet' because the offender experiences the sweetness of completing their order, and the bitterness of losing support. It is therefore essential that endings within correctional practice are handled with care and managed appropriately, in light of the challenges that exist. It is argued that this provides a further rationale for examining endings; to provide additional guidance to practitioners in light of new relational knowledge that is specific to correctional work.

From the findings, the final stage of the relationship was described as a preparation to end the therapeutic correctional relationship. During this stage, a promotion and drive for offender agency to support reintegration, was outlined as the main goal. Practitioners described this stage as: 'getting them ready' having an 'exit strategy' and 'wrapping it up', or as an offender said in jest: 'dancing around the bush'.

By reflecting on the data, at the beginning of the relationship, a practitioner is drawing an offender closer in order to encourage them to engage. Comparatively, at the end of the relationship, the practitioner now needs to encourage the offender to move away and adopt a more autonomous position, allowing the ultimate rupture to inevitably occur. This final opportunity for further growth seemed to have three possible outcomes that emerged from the data: a premature ending, an incomplete ending or an empowering end.

First, nearly all of the negative relationships that were discussed ended prematurely. As I discussed these relationships, it became increasingly evident that offenders distanced themselves through the activation of their own autonomy. This included reoffending, breaching 'on purpose', going 'on the run' and moving area. The following caption from Will (offender) highlights only one of these experiences.

It's easy going to custody for a couple months then do this [probation] for two years and get it over and done with. Come down here, every week for two minutes to see someone, who's not even bothered about you, who's just trying to breach you and I end up committing offences and getting more jail and more time, so I just rather get it over and done with in a way, but I don't do that now, [I've] got to the stage where I don't do that now.

This strengthened the findings from previous work (Lewis, 2014), which suggested that there is a movement towards criminality, as a result of negative relational experiences. It was difficult to hear how individuals would jeopardise their own freedom, in order to manage these situations, which indicated to me that offenders were taking control of a situation, where little control was present.

The second scenario seemed to refer to incomplete endings, which led to sadness and loss. Offenders discussed how they were ‘gutted’, ‘saddened’ and described the feeling that they would ‘miss’ the practitioner. These two captions from different offenders elaborate on these feelings:

I just felt a bit gutted really, because I’d spent the last six or seven months spilling my guts to her and telling her things and then all of a sudden she’s gone ... I’ve got to start all over again, because at the time, my key worker changed and I had a lot of change going on in my life. I don’t like change, I don’t mind a little, but like two or three things, it threw me a bit.
(Nick)

You’re dealing with people on an intimate basis, you know things about this person’s life that most of people don’t know ... and if you cut them off, that’s going to leave a bad taste ... I kind of missed not seeing him ... It got to the point where it wasn’t just about what I was doing, he was telling me what he was doing that week, so you start getting friendly with somebody and you know a little bit about their life ... you are sharing with them as they are sharing with you.

(Mark)

An offender, who was very withdrawn at interview initially, discussed this openly with me towards the end of the interview:

TOM: Towards the end of the licence, I started slipping off the rails again.

SARAH: Do you think that impacted on your relationship with him [the practitioner]?

TOM: Yeah it did, because the guilt and shame of letting him down, it affected me and I could see disappointment in his face and everything and then when I did get arrested his pre-sentence report was blinding, all the work I’d done, it did help me with the sentencing and all that. I carried a lot of feelings about that for a while ... because he left to go to another probation service a little while after that and I didn’t get a chance to say ‘I know I messed up and you helped me a lot.’ I did apologise, but it was quick ... I carried that for quite a few years, but I was the cause.

These captions highlight the range of emotions that can be expressed during this time and the lack of resolution that can transpire (Hall, 1997). It

would appear that these emotions were not fully explored and a discussion about the relationship did not occur. It is suggested, similar to the views of Sundeen *et al.* (1989), that endings are openly discussed and shared during the closing phase of the relationship. As identified by Safran and Muran (2003), the termination of a therapeutic relationship is the ultimate rupture to a relationship and therefore, is an opportunity for learning, in itself. Further attention needs to be paid to promote the final outcome, which was recognised by both players and labelled the ‘empowering end’.

The ‘empowering end’ to a therapeutic correctional relationship was described by both players as a positive moment, where autonomy of the offender was embraced and the offender’s achievements and progress were celebrated. Offenders reminisced these motivational moments, through stories that included phrases such as: ‘She said: “Just try your best, continue doing what you are doing and just be the best you can be”’ (Steven). Mark (offender) described the impact one practitioner had on him:

He’s just given me a lot of confidence and praise, which I think is really important ... everyone should be praised for it, they will appreciate themselves ... it is like he’s backing me up, telling me to go for it and try my best.

The process of increasing autonomy and empowerment were prevalent during the discussions. One practitioner (Sophia) outlined the process of giving final words of advice, but ultimately: ‘Handing back the responsibility ... they are doing the planning, not you.’ This was echoed within the offender interviews. Mark said:

He was fantastic and he was congratulating me and he’s brilliant and when we came to the end of it, he just made me feel like I had become a member of society, he was in recognition for what I done good, anyway, he just treated me like a human being.

In order to support the process of empowerment, practitioners discussed how information sharing and signposting were important skills at this stage, as well as asking the offender for feedback as a demonstration that they had a voice and rights. One practitioner (Holly) gave an example of a phrase she used: ‘Just because your order ends, does not mean we do not exist.’ Another added: ‘Just to cut them off is harsh ... a lot of people don’t come back, but it is about them knowing we are there’ (Andrew). The results highlight the need to empower, promote agency and hope about the future. The process of de-labelling the offender, through a celebration of achievement, is promoted by Maruna (2001), who argued that an act of public celebration is important for reintegration. It is therefore proposed that, as Tierney (2010) notes, relationships of power are central to the labelling process, but also central to processes that de-label.

While the findings did feature the ‘bittersweet’ endings expressed by Ryals (2011), it also highlighted the premature and irrecoverably rupturing of relationships, in correctional practice. This supported the notion that endings can be powerful and an opportunity for learning, as outlined by Knox *et al.* (2011). Further research is needed to confirm these themes but the findings would suggest that further developments within practice are required in order to equip practitioners with the skills to end relationships effectively. Frost (2012) highlighted that ‘happy’ endings (assessed by a positive emotional tone), correlate strongly with well-being and health and a further insight into the added benefits of such endings, with respect to desistance, would be of great value.

It should be noted that the endings of therapeutic correctional relationships differ significantly from psychotherapeutic practice. When an individual embarks upon therapeutic treatment voluntarily, endings are largely determined collaboratively, by practitioner and client. However, correctional endings are somewhat flexible with respect to early revocation (due to positive progress), though determined by date of order termination, irrespective of progress. If positive changes were beginning to occur for the offender and they perceived this to be of value, an extension could be collaboratively agreed. This possibility is highly unlikely or not even appropriate within current practice but irrespective of systemic constraints, I argue that practitioners strive for empowering endings within therapeutic correctional relationships when possible. King (2013) highlighted that self-confidence was a significant factor with respect to desistance as well as a heightened self of empowerment and ownership. This is ideally how an offender should feel when they exit a criminal justice institution, whether they are leaving prison or completing a community order. Putting measures in place to instil such hope may provide offenders with an optimistic ending that could support their journey away from crime. This is rife with challenges when considering where offenders may be living, the attitudes they may hold, the opportunities that may be blocked to them and the lack of progress they may have made while in contact with a criminal justice agency. In this sense, practitioners could be seen as working against the odds. However, as previously discussed (see Judd and Lewis, 2015), perseverance and hope do have a role to play and positive relational experiences may be reflected upon by the offender, when their circumstances and identities shift.

To summarise the findings, Table 5.1 outlines the main principles that were formulated, as a response to the results. The purpose of this table is to provide a set of principles that can be used by practitioners to construct *individualised* relational theories and do not represent a formulaic depiction of relational reality. While the principles correspond with particular phases of the relationship that have been featured, they are not time-bound. It should also be noted that the skill of active listening was featured in different forms throughout the relational narrative and is presented as a core skill, within correctional work.

Table 5.1 The principles of relational narratives

Preparing for the TCR	Be mindful	Critically reflect	Build hope		Active Listening to self, peers and offender
Activating the TCR	Clarify role and set expectations	Promote inclusion	Create hooks of hope and legitimacy	Create ease	
Developing the TCR	Build a therapeutic climate	Collaborate	Be proactive	Introduce pro-social push	
Deepening the TCR	Avoid collusion through boundary reiteration	Deepen collaboration	Create hooks of hope – advocate and nurture a shifting in perspective	Deepen challenging to promote unhooking	
Preparing to end the TCR	Celebrate achievement	Share feelings	Transfer hope through empowerment	Promote agency	

From Table 5.1, it is proposed that attending to therapeutic *processes*, rather than outcomes is of great significance. I argue that these findings have provided a valuable insight into the ways in which relationships evolve. It is not suggested that these findings present the full picture of relational narratives, but create an initial set of principles to assist practitioners within practice. They are not designed to be formulaic or structured, but instead, have been established to support practitioners in creating individualised relational theories about both the offender and practitioner, as a pair. It became evident during the focus groups that as practitioners described their relational narratives, they gained a greater understanding of their relationships. Practitioners seemed comforted to hear from each other and recognised the patterns that emerged through their conversations. Practitioners were asked to reflect upon a specific relationship and map their relationship visually, as well as deconstruct their narratives, while discussing what variables were at play throughout the relational journey. While reflective skills varied, all were capable of carrying out this task and it is argued that if deeper reflective skills and mindfulness were integrated within probation and prison training, positive changes would emerge in practice. It is suggested that front-end investment is promoted in the future with respect to training to establish foundational skills and knowledge for practitioners and that continuous professional development is integrated more heavily within practice.

Lambert and Simon (2008) highlighted that the practice of mindfulness has been found to assist in developing therapeutic relationships with numerous tools and exercises that can assist in this development. With the implementation of a framework to develop reflective skills in probation practice is currently in operation, deeper reflection could be implemented though other correctional

services (such as community rehabilitative companies or prisons) would need to adopt training to facilitate and support such processes. Further research to examine how relationships shift and shape within a prison context would also be of great interest and establish whether similar patterns are observed. Brooks's (2005) work on HMP Grendon discusses how prisoners react to the first moments in Grendon as they are asked to wait in the waiting room, treated like people, offered a handshake and welcomed. I witnessed a similar experience upon visiting an open prison in Norway, where respect and humanistic practices are embedded within the culture. There is much debate around whether such practices can be imported into mainstream prisons. I find it hard to consider a reason why respectful, collaborative relationships would not be appropriate within prison in light of the benefits that have been well established within the literature and the aim to return a prisoner to society with these very virtues. In order for such changes to work effectively, a cultural shift, strong leadership and receptive staff are only some of the factors that are necessary. Paying greater attention to relationships and how they form within a prison context would assist prison practitioners in forming therapeutic correctional relationships and explore whether the processes that exist within a psychotherapeutic and rehabilitative context are similar. Stevens' (2013) illuminates the key benefits of supportive environments from her work at a therapeutic community. She concludes from her work that through this environment, residents at the therapeutic prison gained emotional insights into their lives and uncovered the 'true meaning' of their offending. These normalising effects gave prisoners a deeper awareness and understanding of their problems, which built self-confidence and responsibility over their own lives. Such environments enabled change and allowed prisoners to think of their lives 'beyond prison' (p. 160). It provided hope of change that was transformative. As stipulated in this chapter, gaining a greater insight into offenders through relational work may provide prisons with important knowledge that is needed to operate a successful and safe prison.

Returning to probation, my relational work reinforces the ideas that certain relationships may not only influence the change process at the time of the relationship, but have long term benefits. I found that positive relationships between offenders and their probation supervisor led to an increased level of legitimacy and faith in probation as an organisation (Lewis, 2014). They played a role in sustaining positive changes in their life and provided a positive experience to them, which supported their journey away from crime. This supports the work of Liebrich (1994) who interviewed desisters in New Zealand after a sustained period of 'going straight'. She concluded from her work that positive relational work between a probation practitioner and offender played a vital role in supporting desistance and held long-term benefits. Such relationships were a factor in influencing offending behaviour and 'good' relationships were associated with rapport building, being genuine and honest and balancing control and care. While internal factors, such as an intrinsic motivation to change were also identified by the offenders as significant, the

role criminal justice practices play in creating opportunities for relationships, was also pivotal.

While fully establishing the long-term impact of relationships is problematic due to the complexities of change, Farrall *et al.* (2014) identified that positive correctional relationships did sometimes take time to ‘bear fruit’. Farrall *et al.* (2014) identified that opportunities for desistance can take place *before* any intrinsic motivation is present and may still have some impact. While it may feel for the practitioner that their words are falling on deaf ears, there is the suggestion that these moments may grow into something of significance at a later date. Farrall *et al.* (2014) presents a useful model that highlights the way in which no response from the offender, may develop over time and be stimulated by other meaningful variables (including events such as becoming a parent). As offender’s progress through their lives, past advice from their probation officer may be recollected and utilised. This in itself is an injection of hope for the practitioner, who may feel initially they did not have an impact on an offender during the time they were on probation supervision. From my research, some offenders recalled past professional relationships they experienced over 15 years ago, and yet by reflecting on the therapeutic qualities of these relationship, it highlighted to them their significance and value.

The beneficial long-term effects of relationships may also be concluded from the work of Donati (2011) and Weaver and McNeill (2015), who highlight the far-reaching impact of relationships across other relational spheres, such as friendship groups, families and religious commitments. By nurturing what Donati (2011) refers to as relational ‘goods’ (including reciprocity, trust and equality) within correctional relationships, broader lessons can be learnt which can be transferred into other relational contexts. The power of relationships is recognised by Weaver and McNeill (2015), not only on an interpersonal level, but through all levels of society. They state:

Personal change will struggle to secure desistance if that change is not also recognised and supported by the community (‘social rehabilitation’), by the law, and by the state (‘judicial rehabilitation’).

(Weaver and McNeill, 2015: 105)

This highlights the importance of investing in authentic relational work within correctional practice and promoting positive relationships within other relational contexts. There will be a number of nuances that need to be taken into consideration, though the basic relational principles outlined here initiate such debates, from a practice perspective. Having considered the broad stages of relational narrative and the principles associated with relational narratives, this project will now focus on relational micro-processes; the identification and resolution of ruptures in correctional work.

Notes

- 1 From reviewing the literature, the stages of therapeutic relationships featured heavily within the disciplines of nursing and psychotherapy. These will be briefly examined with the focus on discussing the extent to which such relationships can be applied to probation practice and other criminal justice relationships.
- 2 When the term 'client' is stated, it refers to individuals that are in psychological treatment/therapy and not offenders specifically.

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6 Relationships and ruptures: safeguarding the therapeutic correctional relationship

There is great value in not only exploring how relationships are formed and the mechanisms that lie beneath them, but also how they can be severed and disrupted over time. It is suggested within psychotherapy that a positive relational outcome is not simply relative to the characteristics of the practitioner, but more closely associated with the successful resolution of relational ruptures (Safran and Muran, 2003). For example, Horvath and Marx (1991) described the course of the relationship, as a sequence of developments, breaches and repairs that are normal and prevalent within any therapeutic relationship. This chapter will examine relational ruptures within the context of corrections, drawing on the outcomes of primary work, to establish what ruptures are and how they can be successfully repaired within practice. Luborsky (1984) proposed that the strength of a therapeutic relationship is its capacity to work through internal and external stresses without breaking down, with both players persisting due to their shared dedication to the goals that have been set. In this way, Luborsky (1984) highlighted that relationships function as a way to overcome obstacles in one's self, a notion that has also featured within Maruna's (2001) work in relation to desistance. This chapter proposes that relationships work in a way that facilitates growth and can be used to stimulate growth with respect to identity transformation. It also highlights the additional challenges of ruptures when they are situated within a correctional context, proposing ways to address such challenges. This chapter is organised into two parts: the first part introduces and addresses ruptures within probation practice, and the second part considers ways in which ruptures can be managed, in light of this knowledge.

Introducing ruptures

A rupture can be understood as the deterioration in the quality of a therapeutic relationship, which presents itself as an opportunity for learning (Safran and Muran, 1996). This relies upon the establishment of a therapeutic relationship, before a 'tear' and 'repair' (Safran, 1993) process can occur. Examples of such ruptures include: a breakdown in communication; a disagreement associated to the goals of therapy and a lack of understanding that

can be perceived by practitioners, clients or a third party observer (Safran *et al.*, 2011). Safran (1993) argued that a number of ruptures can occur at the beginning of a relationship and if this occurs too early in the therapeutic process, it can lead to permanent damage and a breakdown in the formation of a therapeutic relationship. Therefore, ruptures can either create a barrier at the initial stages of a relationship or create a 'blip' which facilitates the client in addressing maladaptive interpersonal schemata (Safran and Muran, 1996). It would seem ruptures vary in terms of their strength (and impact) and can be experienced as a tension, conflict or misunderstanding, which is seen as inevitable within a collaborative relationship (Safran and Muran, 2006). While Bordin's work would suggest a rupture can relate to an disagreement within goal, task or bond, Safran and Muran (2006) further this by asserting that ruptures can be an event that takes place which may result in a cycle of hostility (a confrontation rupture) or distance (a withdrawal rupture). Safran and Muran (2006) propose that if ruptures are not recognised and addressed, then this may prevent progress from taking place. This could lead to additional problems such as non-compliance or dropping out of the treatment process (Samstag *et al.*, 1998). Whilst there is a possible negative outcome of ruptures, if they are not resolved effectively, Safran and Muran (2000) argue that ruptures are an opportunity to explore and understand relational representations that individuals have, indicating that relationships in themselves impact on identity and forming a sense of self.

Rupture work has developed the theoretical understanding of therapeutic relationships, as it has highlighted that positive outcomes are not only influenced by the development of a therapeutic relationship, but on the resolution of ruptures. While Day and Ward (2010) referred to similar processes within a correctional setting as 'therapeutic blunders', Safran and his colleagues (1992, 1998, 2003) considered these processes in significant detail. The notion of ruptures within correctional work is currently absent from the literature and it is therefore of interest to determine how ruptures differ from those described within the field of psychotherapy. It is acknowledged that psychotherapeutic ruptures may differ from those in correctional settings, due to the additional complexities of correctional relationships.

The prevalence and nature of ruptures has been explored in order to gain a greater understanding of relational processes. For example, Nagy *et al.* (1998) found that ruptures are common within any therapeutic relationship and found from their observations of therapy sessions, that 25 to 35 per cent of the sessions included ruptures in some form. Muran *et al.* (2009) later reported that rupture prevalence can be as high as 56 per cent, from observing the first six sessions of therapy. While Safran and Muran (1998) acknowledged that some ruptures can occur without the practitioner or client being aware of this, it was noted by Nagy *et al.* (1998) that practitioners were more likely to recognise ruptures compared to clients. Safran *et al.* (2001) later argued that the management of ruptures can account for the different patterns that occur during relational development and can account for the variety of ways

individuals respond and form therapeutic relationship. This may illustrate the very reason why relationships (and their meaning), may be considered unique to the individual and why disengagement occurs. While the language may vary between the correctional and psychotherapeutic world, I argue that the events that would constitute a rupture are similar. My research aims to establish how correctional ruptures differ from psychotherapeutic ruptures so that relational knowledge can be applied to practice appropriately.

While the term ‘rupture’ was not a familiar term among practitioners or offenders that were involved in the research, each participant could recall movements in a relationship where they felt unease, upset or confusion. Upon reflection, the work of ruptures illuminated and explained a number of unresolved problems I had experienced while working with offenders and this enlightenment was shared among practitioners taking part in the research and subsequently since. There were therapeutic moments that felt strained and lacked explanation, or reactions that seemed to arise from nowhere. Looking back, to have had some guidance or understanding of such moments would have been both comforting and reassuring. This personal desire to unravel ruptures in practice and provide support and guidance propelled this investigation into the tear and repair process. I was also motivated to examine how correctional ruptures differed from those that were discussed within psychotherapeutic literature and subsequently formulated two research questions in response to this:

- 1 How do offenders and practitioners describe ruptures within correctional relationships?
- 2 How might practitioners repair ruptures within correctional practice?

This chapter will describe the specific ruptures that were identified in my doctoral research and then discuss ways in which ruptures can be recovered within correctional practice. I strongly feel that ruptures are normal to all relationships, though they vary, depending upon the context in which they exist. It is believed that the ruptures featured here are just some of the many ruptures that exist within correctional practice. It would appear that the timing of a rupture, within the relational narrative, may alter the way it is perceived and consequently, the way in which it is managed. For example, if a number of ruptures take place very early in a relationship, this may have a significant effect on the relationship transforming into a therapeutic correctional relationship, particularly if no attempt is made to mend such early tears. In responding to ruptures, a set of principles to repair ruptures have been proposed because a detailed formulaic approach is considered inappropriate, due to the dynamic and individualised nature of these relationships. What I argue here is: one size does not fit all. An approach needs to be clearly considered and is dependent upon the players in the relationship, the moment in time and the context of the relationship itself. Put simply, strategies differ over time. This is supported by Safran and Muran’s work

(2003: 140), as they similarly suggested that: 'The goal is not to offer rigidly prescriptive models, but rather to help clinicians develop pattern-recognition that can facilitate the intervention process.' It should also be noted that in accordance with the work of Nagy *et al.* (1998), my research found that correctional practitioners seemed more aware of ruptures, when compared with offenders. This was evident in how they constructed their visual narratives, as well as how they described their relationships. It was also interesting to observe how offenders rarely acknowledged ruptures when therapeutic correctional relationships were discussed and focused on the positive aspects alone. It was as if they experienced a halo effect towards the practitioner, and relished in the virtues of the practitioner and the growth of the relationship. Comparatively, practitioners were more able to describe ruptures that occurred in their relationships and were aware of how these ruptures contributed to non-compliance or confrontation. Prior to the research project, an offender and I discussed our own relationship and through time, we were able to identify some key ruptures that occurred during our relational journey. During this honest discussion, it was interesting to see how we constructed our therapeutic correctional relationship and how such a discussion in itself, progressed our relationship to new depths. From reviewing the literature after this event, it would seem that we participated in what Dworkin and Errebo (2010) would call a 'now moment', which signifies an authentic moment that involved sharing and listening. This moment for me was illuminating and shone a light on an area of practice that I had never previously considered. From the research and such reflections, I argue that ruptures can be identified through discussion (though some will inevitably remain unconscious) and an examination of these could be of great value. These will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7 with respect to training and research, as I turn to the main findings from the thematic analysis.

Part 1: Ruptures in practice

Three core themes emerged from the data, which can be collectively linked to different constructs of power. These were: boundaries and duplicity, the visibility of power and relational power games.

Theme 1: Boundaries and duplicity

Initially, both players discussed how a lack of clarity around boundaries and roles could contribute to a moment of strain, or complete withdrawal from the correctional relationship. This seemed to be linked to the offender's belief that a practitioner's behaviour deviated from what was expected, within the context of their role. From further participatory analysis, ruptures relating to offender-practitioner boundaries, created a moment of exclusion and a movement away from the practitioner. To illustrate, offenders discussed

examples of possible ruptures which included; a 'bad' report that was not shared with the offender prior to a court appearance and a planned arrest at the probation office during a probation appointment. For example, Gary (offender) stated:

She wrote this report, a massive report against me, didn't tell me what it said and just said it was an 'ok' report and what they're meant to do is pull me into the office and let me read through it and she did none of that and when I went to court it was the first time I heard about it. It was absolutely horrendous and it didn't reflect anything good that I had done, it just highlighted all the bad things, all the bad points and I was absolutely furious.

Similarly, Jason (offender) stated:

A couple of probation officers were not how I would expect a probation officer to be. In their pre-sentence reports there has not been any positive stuff I've done in there, everything's been overlooked, it's just all the negatives.

Another (Will) stated plainly:

Oh yeah, course they're sly, probation officers are sly, I've been arrested in here [the probation office] a few times by police, coming for your interview, as if nothing is the matter, through the back door.

The need to disclose previous offences for public protection, write reports relating to risk and plan arrests are all functions of probation within contemporary practice. *How* these events are managed and carried out through a consideration of rights-based practice is maybe of greater important. As discussed within the findings relating to the initial meeting with an offender, a clear establishment of role is required in order to avoid role ambiguity of the practitioner. While this may, in itself, be perceived as a rupture by the offender, there needs to be a distinction between what the practitioner can and cannot alter, through the management of expectations. Compared to psychotherapeutic ruptures, I argue that more ruptures are likely within a correctional setting due to systemic power and that ruptures are more frequent as power becomes more unequal. This not only highlights the importance of future rupture research, but also acknowledges the challenging nature of the work that is undertaken. It also begs the question: why are some contexts more unequal than others and how can equality be nurtured and to what degree? Looking at our Nordic neighbours, equality is embedded deeper within the fabric of society (see Pratt, 2008) and being immersed into such a context may partially account for their relative success at rehabilitation This would imply that aligning top-down and bottom-up processes on a larger scale may be of significance within the remit of rehabilitation, though confirming such a link has its challenges.

Returning to the research, during the participatory analysis, an ex-offender stated that by enforcing power through 'sly arrests', mutual trust is threatened and compromised, as if a therapeutic correctional relationship were conditional upon compliance. It seemed the case that when the offender was engaging and receptive, then a relationship was welcomed and nurtured, and yet when legitimacy of the offender was questioned, the 'rules' surrounding a therapeutic relationship (including trust and respect) were absolved. Practitioners played a different game. To illustrate, Will (offender) stated:

I have always been honest [within therapeutic correctional relationships] ... I will take my punishment on the chin and if they recall me, then I would go to the police station and hand myself in. I've done that on plenty of occasions because every day you do out on the run, you do in prison anyway. If they said to me, 'I'm going to breach you', phone you and tell you when you need to come in ... I think a lot of people would.

This is a clear example of systemic power in action (determined by the offender's behaviour) and how it is projected onto the therapeutic correctional relationship. In this sense, from the practitioner's perspective, there is a level of uncertainty that may create anxieties and ultimately question the legitimacy of that relationship. With respect to enforcement and probation office arrests, it is understandable why an offender may feel that trust has been breached. However, in light of the responsibility to protect the public (and avoid public scrutiny and shaming), therapeutic correctional relationships are jeopardised as systemic processes override the relationship and ultimately lead to the offender feeling that dishonest practice has occurred. This again illuminates the tensions and contradictions within therapeutic correctional relationships and how a practitioner may need to grapple with advocating an offender one day and activating a breach the next.

Similarly, unclear boundaries and the feelings of dishonesty were discussed by practitioners with respect to ruptures. Andrew (practitioner) stated in response to the question: what may threaten a relationship?

ANDREW: Mention the two words 'Children's Services'.

SARAH: What's that about?

ANDREW: Someone feeling that their children will be taken away or you're interfering with their private family life ... they think you have gone beyond the call of duty.

And another (Charlie) commented:

To a degree, they see it as a betrayal, that it is something that you do not have to do ... and they think you are tightening up or changing the boundaries.

This supported the notion of movement within the relational narrative, through the representation of boundaries and the perceived threat of these boundaries for the offender, at one moment in time. It highlighted moments within the relationship, where offenders may move from an inclusive relationship, to being excluded due to the overarching priorities attributed to risk management. The importance of expectation exchange and role clarification seemed a recurring theme, and yet practitioners are currently not advised or informed how they may go about such a difficult task or how they then endeavour to repair the damage of an event, if the offender returns to them after the breach. How these events are managed is therefore vital to increase the likelihood of safeguarding the relationship.

The separating out of roles between state and practitioner, as suggested by Clark (2005), may also begin to resolve some of the issues around how power is constructed and presented to the offender at the initial stages of the relationship. This supported the ideas of Fisher (1990), who argued that therapeutic relatedness can be conceptualised as a 'shared experience', that is contingent on two equal individuals. Fisher (1990) proposed that the opposite of this 'shared experience' is that of alienation, and similarities can be observed within the data. As highlighted by Odiah and Wright (2000), the extent of fully establishing a therapeutic correctional relationship is problematic, as enforcement is characteristic to correctional identity. It is suggested that when establishing such boundaries, role is separated as much as possible, from the relationship. This may enable the 'shared experience' (Fisher, 1990) of a therapeutic correctional relationship to coexist alongside the systemic restraints of enforcement, so long as the offender is informed of boundaries and role. I argue that training is key to the success of these recommendations, as well as a cultural acknowledgment that relationships may require additional investment after the breach process. Due to the hybridisation of risk and need (Hannah-Moffat, 2005), the welfaristic role is difficult to separate from enforcement, which may be due to a variance of relatedness that alters the visibility of power. While it is nigh on impossible to decouple these two roles, this may not be necessary. By separating out enforcement and establishing boundaries through the use of promoting agency (e.g. stating: 'These boundaries exist and you have control of whether they are activated, as this is dependent upon your behaviour'), the relationship can be preserved as much as possible, in light of the correctional context. *How* it is presented by the practitioner may be of greater importance.

Tentative links can be made between different correctional settings, such as prison. McDermott and King (1988) suggest that the nature of relationships between prison officer and prisoner has shifted within English prisons, where mind games are been used as a way to exert power rather than using physical violence. Rupture work can also be linked to Liebling's (2005, 2008) extensive work on moral performance and legitimacy, as she shows similar themes associated with establishing professional boundaries and prison officers demonstrating fairness in their work. Practices such as unequal treatment

among prisoners, exclusionary practice and seemingly small acts, such as not providing a reason for decisions made, may all provide opportunities for ruptures to take place within a prison setting. Due to the absence of rupture work it is difficult to postulate which practices may increase the likelihood of a rupture as this is heavily dependent upon the nature of the individual relationship between prison officer and prisoner and the meaning that is attached to it by the prisoner. Further work in this area would certainly bridge the gap of knowledge with respect to what ruptures are particularly characteristic within a prison context.

Theme 2: Crossing the lines: the visibility of power

Lehmann and Simmons (2009) suggested that practitioners can sometimes mirror the characteristics of offenders through unnecessary controls, being inflexible with rules and demonstrating a more punitive approach, all of which are not congruent to a therapeutic environment. It appeared from the data that power was understood in different ways, to produce similar outcomes. The visibility of power was discussed in relation to the extent practitioner's highlighted power within correctional relationships, on a moment by moment basis, as well as operating on a broader level. It would seem that as both players drew close to one another, with the desire to relate, the presence of power faded into the backdrop. From the data, particular events (i.e. power ruptures), increased the visibility of power for both players, leading to feelings of discomfort. In some senses, it is similar to the story of the porcupines outlined by Schopenhauer (1851, cited by Mattinson, 1975) discussed in Chapter 4. To illustrate, a practitioner described the relationship as follows: 'It is nice and woolly, but when you challenge them, it puts that relationship at risk.' This exertion of power did not appear to be perceived by the practitioner alone, but also by the offender. Steven (offender) exclaimed: 'They are very polite, they are very positive, they are very cheerful unless you do something wrong of course and then they are very forthright.' This can be compared to the notion of offender's power, as Joel (practitioner) said:

There was a clear control issue from the off, he wanted to do everything on his own time and at his own pace ... he didn't accept boundaries because from his perspective, he didn't feel his behaviour needed challenging.

This highlights the link between a lack of acceptance over boundaries and how this could later contribute to power struggles and ruptures, within the relationship. Through the consideration of Foucault's work (1980), it would seem that disciplinary power is two-way to the extent practitioners may become docile, as a response to a dominant offender who may be resisting institutional power. As Foucault (1980) stated: 'there are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because

they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised' (p. 142). The findings suggested that offenders can also misuse power within a relational context, by controlling behaviour that pushes the practitioner away and towards the exclusionary position, as indicated below in Figure 6.1. Within this figure, the offender is using their autonomy to exert power within the relationship, which subsequently moves the practitioner outside of the therapeutic frame and into a position of exclusion. Practitioners described how they felt disempowered, as a response to an offender's need to exert control. One female officer (Holly) described how this was the case with an offender, who was domestically abusive and had strong sexist views. The power in this relationship was unequal and the offender was working on his own terms, through the use of his autonomy and his lack of desire to relate to Holly in any way.

An offender (Mason) described how, within the first meeting with their probation officer, the visibility of practitioner power was evident:

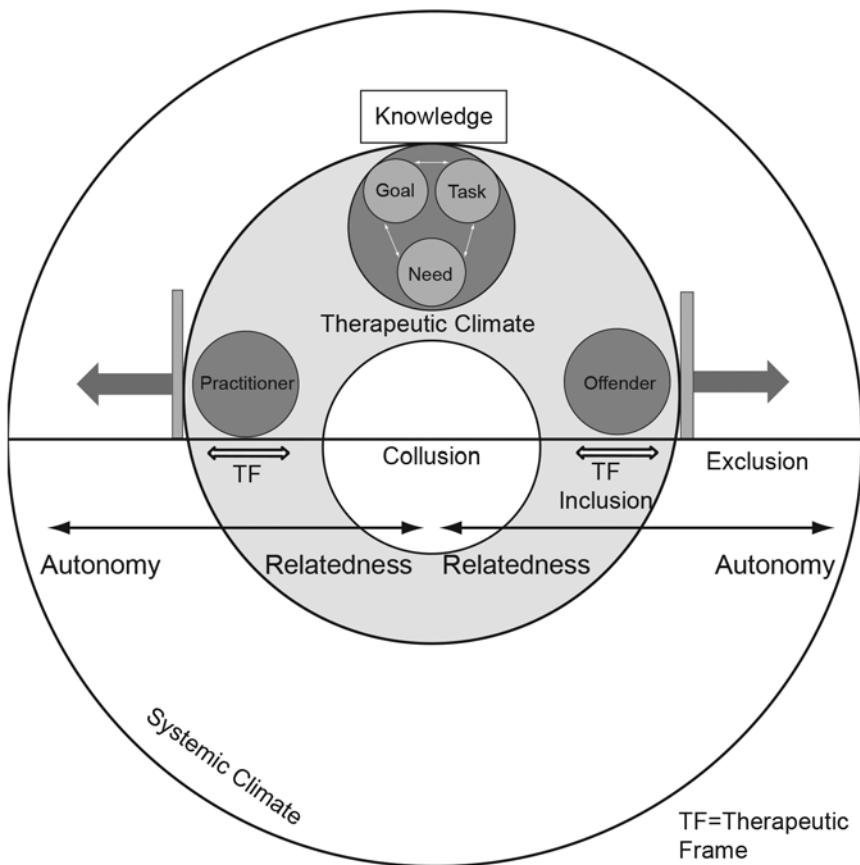


Figure 6.1 The movement of both players due to a power rupture

They would come in, acting like they're stuck up, telling you what to do, instead of giving new solutions, just acting cocky and not listening to you and interrupts you when you're speaking, all that kind of stuff.

Another commented on subtle indicators of power:

Delivery and tone are important to me as they have previously been a trigger point for me ... For me personally, it's the delivery of a question. For example, one thing that I have experienced, something simple like, 'Where have you been?' Almost in an accusing tone or, alternatively, 'Where have you been?' In a more inquiring tone ... if it's aimed in a slightly accusing manner, or I feel it's a personal attack, or it threatens me, that will trigger me off to respond in a similar way.

(Adam)

This caption not only highlights how power can manifest itself within seemingly small details (such as tone), but also how the response to the rupture can cause a confrontational reaction. Safran and Muran (2003) distinguished between confrontational and withdrawal ruptures, which elicits an individual to fight or flee as a response to a rupture. From reviewing Safran and Muran's work (2003) and the work of Harper (1989), this moment of Adam's is identified as a confrontational rupture as he draws upon language such as 'attack' and 'trigger'. Rice and Greenberg (1984) argued that when a rupture occurs, a number of markers exist that indicate a rupture has occurred (e.g. aggression). These may be indicators that the practitioner can observe in the offender (e.g. the individual visibly withdraws from the situation) or even feel in themselves (e.g. an emotion arises from within). This presents numerous challenges for the correctional practitioner. First, there is a need to be aware of subtle adaptations within their own actions, thinking and feelings and, second, the practitioner's need to recognise markers in others. From the data, it emerged that while an offender may signal, through their behaviour, that a rupture has occurred, practitioners also have internal markers that indicate to them that a rupture has occurred. Practitioners described feelings of frustration, anger, hurt and guilt, following a rupture. This extends Safran and Muran's (2003) work on markers and suggests that if practitioners were more aware of rupture indicators, they may be able to manage ruptures more effectively. While it may be questionable whether practitioners are capable of such skills, during the focus groups, practitioners with a variety of experience could identify ruptures in their own relationships, as well as discuss the markers that identified rupture occurrence. For example, it was recognised that the use of sarcasm by the practitioner may lead to an offender mirroring sarcasm (external marker) and the practitioner responding through feelings of frustration (internal marker), resulting in a confrontational challenge (external marker). The internal markers varied significantly with respect to different ruptures, from feelings of anxiety to feelings of helplessness and inadequacy.

It was felt, upon reflection, that simply talking and sharing experiences of this nature during the focus group was helpful for the practitioner and while such discussions created initial unease, valued growth seemed to follow. In some senses, ruptures were going on in that very room. With support, I argue that practitioners could be made more aware of fine-detailed relational experiences that may contribute to change. It is proposed, in accordance with Rex (1999), that the role of the practitioner is underestimated within practice and in the same vein, it is argued that practitioner's ability to achieve a deep reflective stance is underestimated. Offenders too are underestimated as they can create a greater flow in communication between the practitioner and offender, which could facilitate some surprising outcomes.

Moving on, practitioners were also confident that the presentation of power was important. One practitioner discussed how an event, such as a breach, may be managed ineffectively and what scenarios may contribute to a rupture:

To exert any control ... If you don't explain the decision or seem completely inflexible, or don't engage in a conversation around it and then, the first they hear about it is in a letter, being a return to court.

Another practitioner highlighted the importance of the way in which practitioners challenge, again referring to subtle changes, such as tone. Other practitioners discussed emotions (e.g. anger and frustration) or thoughts, which could increase the likelihood of a power rupture. For example, Richard said: 'This is a waste of time ... why can't he just see what I see ... how can you not get it?' As a response to these emotions and thoughts, practitioners described how they may challenge or pursue a challenge, for different reasons other than promoting positive change through collaboration. For example, one practitioner (Karen) stated: 'I will push and push and push until they get empathy.' Another practitioner (Charlie) described it as: 'Doing the same thing, time and time again, but not letting go ... it is a power thing.' This accumulation of power and increased visibility of power, inevitably led to an active use of power through enforcement, as Richard (practitioner) put it 'a crack-down: these are the boundaries!'. With these words came a great deal of emotion, with feelings of frustration, despair and anxiety being experienced and expressed in the group. As discussed by Safran and Muran (2003), it would appear that in response to a rupture, the recipient reacts through confrontation or withdrawal. This flight or fright response became evident in the data from both players, as offenders described the paralysing effects of power ruptures. To illustrate, an offender (Gary) commented after describing a particularly negative relationship:

I was quite shut, I was quite shut, tightly shut, why should I have to tell them? Why should I have to explain to them? That made it quite a bit harder with getting on with probation officers.

In addition to this, Andrew (an offender) stated: 'Yeah they are in conflict because if you're here to help me but then you're threatening me it causes

that bond to break down because you have exerted your authority in a way that you shouldn't of.' These two captions highlight a number of thoughts. First, that behaviour that is deemed antisocial in nature may be a reaction to events outside of the offender. Second, that such behaviour may reinforce what a practitioner has 'made up' about that particularly offender and contribute to an upscaling of risk. Third, that ruptures may play a role in the representations that offenders construct about correctional practitioners and in this sense, they are 'making up' practitioners and create further distance between themselves and those whose role is to support them. From these proposals, I assert that greater attention is paid to ruptures in future correctional research to establish the extent of these tentative findings for if they are a reality, their impact could be far-reaching.

Comparatively, a practitioner (Joel) shared his experience that could be seen as more confrontational:

... keeping on and going and going and going and not letting go ... that situation is made worse ... when we got together, we would clash because I wouldn't let go, he was a complete denier, he wouldn't move, shift at all, in the slightest way. We were like two immovable forces and it just did not work ... I went to the manager and said that I have got to let this go because it is going in a completely negative way ... and it was a horrendous relationship.

Safran and Muran (2003) discussed such situations and the paralysing impact on the practitioner, as they are in conflict with their feelings of frustration. It is suggested that during such times, practitioners need to re-establish 'internal space', that is, an analytical space to explore the rupture. This can be achieved through appropriate self disclosure, as Safran and Muran (2003) illustrated through this example: 'It feels to me like you and I are in a power struggle right now' or 'I am struggling not to respond defensively.' In order for responses such as these to be effectively used within correctional work, a climate needs to exist that acknowledges that ruptures are normal and do occur and can be discussed openly. I propose that this will not only deepen the relationship and promote growth in both the practitioner and offender, but I believe it will build legitimacy on a broader level. The practitioner faces a number of challenges with the occurrence of a rupture: how they manage them, how they talk about them and how they gain support regarding them. Within probation, the reflective initiatives have developed peer learning and observational work and could support the process of rupture resolution, though this is contingent upon an engaged practitioner and a supportive senior management.

From the data, offenders also struggled with confrontational practitioners. Mark (offender) described his experience:

SARAH: How did it feel, being in that meeting with her (the practitioner)?

MARK: I wanted to lose my temper, I wanted to kick off, I would of quite happily started smashing the room up, throwing chairs at the window ... [but] it was a woman and I couldn't do anything, if it was a man, I would have probably had a fight.

It would appear that there are numerous ways power can manifest itself, contributing or reducing the likelihood of a rupture. As highlighted in my previous work (Lewis, 2014b), challenging an offender's behaviour can be effective, depending upon the climate and relationship that exists. If a therapeutic climate does not exist and relatedness is not 'good enough' (Ross *et al.*, 2008), then challenging behaviour may be perceived by the offender as an abuse of power (Lewis, 2014b). This could create a stalemate position in some instances as the practitioner is anchored outside the therapeutic frame and cannot easily (or has no motivation to) encourage offender movement. It is therefore argued that, in order to reduce ruptures within correctional relationships, the focus needs to be on creating a climate that increases the likelihood of change. There is an acknowledgement that some offenders are not ready and cannot be forced to be ready to change. This does not mean that the practitioner is redundant, but merely that different hooks need to be utilised and practitioners need to persevere with hope.

With reference to the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships, this would imply that, similar to Crawley's work (2004) within a prison context, there exist lines that can be crossed, by either player, in response to an exertion of power. It is argued that these lines form the boundaries of the therapeutic frame and vary in transparency depending upon a variety of factors, including the activation of power and ruptures within the correctional relationship. These lines have been added to the model in Figure 6.2 to illustrate their possible position. I argue, in light of my findings, that if a line is crossed by either player, a rupture is more likely to occur.

Within a prison context, acts relating to power and its visibility regularly feature within prison life. Power on a structural level is highly visible in the majority of prisons due to their aboding architecture and atmosphere. And yet, power and its visibility seems to vary depending upon which prison you are standing in or even where you are in that prison. Upon a visit to Halden prison in Norway, this became particularly evident. As you approach this brand new maximum security prison the walls seem pretty standard to your average prison and yet, sitting in a small lodge that has been designed for fathers to spend time with their children, looking out into a sea of tall trees, with natural light streaming through the windows, you could forget where you are. Moving away from contextual factors, visiting a humanistic ecological open prison in Norway (which operates also as a farm among other things) demonstrated another kind of visibility. Prisoners and staff systematically waved and courteously greeted each other as I walked around the prison. A moment arose whereupon a prisoner was asked to take the lead and show me and my colleague the sheep that were cared for, as part of the regime of the

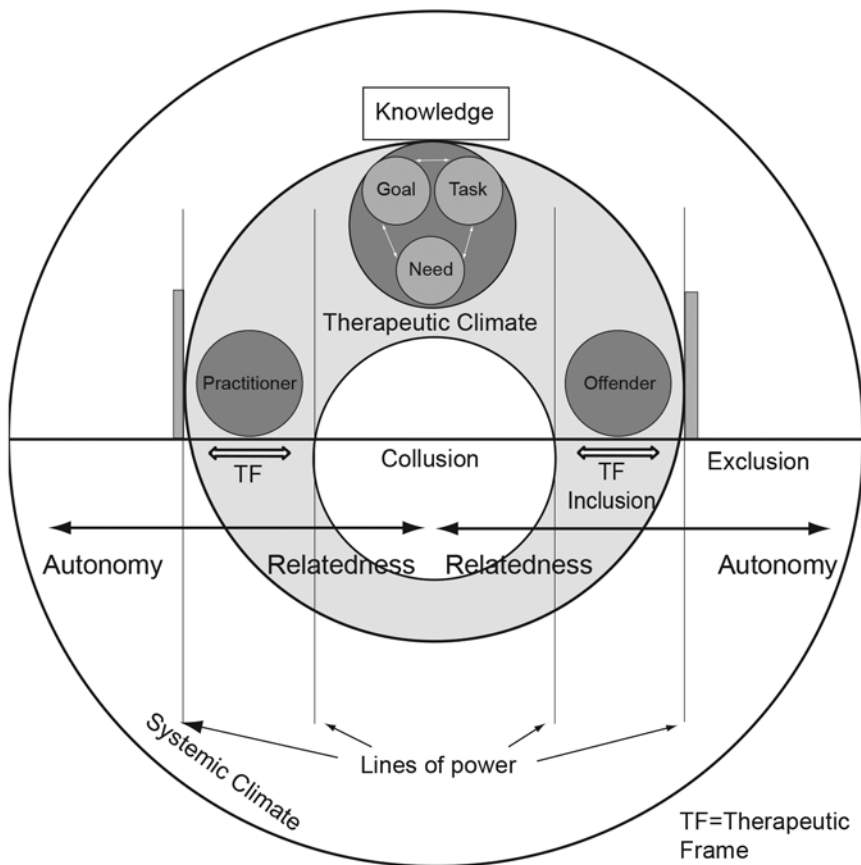


Figure 6.2 A depiction of power at the boundaries of the therapeutic frame

prison. The prisoner opened the door for the governor, who was showing us round, at which point the governor took the door and said very plainly ‘no, no, you first, you are the boss’. This almost reversal of power in this brief moment held great significance to me and the impact I witnessed in the prisoner as he smiled and walked through the door was palpable. Further work that investigates under what conditions, in a place of confinement, a prisoner may feel autonomy would hold real importance in establishing how power can be manipulated in more positive ways, to resolve ruptures, challenge negative representations of authority and propel growth.

Theme 3: Power games as ruptures

The final aspect of power emanating from the data related to relational games and it seemed that practitioners were generally more conscious of these

games, than offenders. This concurred with the notion that ruptures can ‘burst through dramatically into awareness or emerge gradually and half consciously’, as described by Shadbolt (2012: 11). Three sub-themes emerged with respect to power games; blocking, baiting and battling. First, blocking seemed to occur as a response to an offender ‘pushing buttons’. One practitioner (Charlie) expressed:

He elicits a personal reaction and sometimes you step outside your professional boundaries and the response to him is dismissive.

In this way, the offender was blocked through dismissive practice and the practitioner moves away (to become more autonomous), as their desire to relate diminishes. Another practitioner (Karen) described the reasons for this reaction honestly: ‘It becomes out of spite ... if you are not seeing any change or acceptance, we [practitioners] shut down.’ Blocking games were also linked to how practitioners understood the prohibition of relatedness and sharing. Charlie (practitioner) described one way in which they could highlight their power within the room: ‘Not allowing them to vent ... not letting them say what is important to them, or show emotions.’ The exclusion of the offender and withdrawal from the therapeutic correctional relationship was then outlined by Karen: ‘I would rather not go there ... they [the offender] have let me down.’ The practitioners seemed to explain this movement, not only as a reaction to frustration, but also disappointment and feelings of inadequacy, as a practitioner. They discussed how the blocking of an offender was a way of coping with the perceived failure¹ of the offender at that time. By analysing these passages, I was drawn back to Maruna’s (2012) discussion regarding the need for practitioners to have an ‘injection of hope’. It also caused me to consider my own research (Lewis, 2014c) that highlighted how belief in change can fade for a probation practitioner, over the course of their career. These findings begin to reveal the reasons why this overall movement away from offenders may occur and signifies the importance of investing in relational work to preserve this important value within correctional practice. Flesaker and Larsen (2012) discuss in their work the notion that a fading of hope can contribute to burnout in practitioners and from my own experiences, this observation rings true. It would seem logical to suggest that people become tired and find it difficult to sustain optimism, when faced with the rocky road of desistance time and time again. How practitioners are supported to preserve hope is therefore of great significance and this task is shared by both the practitioner themselves and those that lead and manage, within a correctional or rehabilitative organisation. Within the current penal climate, such findings may fall on deaf ears due to the rapid organisational change that is occurring and the uncertainty that is ongoing within probation practice. With additional role ambiguity and changes within leadership, this is a time that holds many challenges. However, within the context of probation, Newman and Nutley (2003) argued that values inherent to probation

continue to thrive in practice and Weaver (2012: 409) specified: ‘What is required is a relational revolution, underpinned not by market forces but by concepts of mutual obligation and reciprocity.’ It is my intention that through active dissemination and perseverance, these findings will evidence the need that a relational revolution is necessary to further correctional practice. That a relational revolution is dramatic and wide-reaching, in the same way that relationships are embedded within society and far-reaching within and between organisations. But relationships are more than this. Relationships are symbolic; symbolic of how healthy a society is, how accepting a society is and how trusting a society is. Relationships ebb and flow through every fibre of society and their acknowledgement is necessary to bring about positive change.

Another power game that was described involved the baiting of offenders; one practitioner (Richard) stated: ‘I can make fun of you [an offender] because I am enforcing these rules.’ Within a different focus group, Andrew said: ‘I have had people that have been so rubbish and so demotivated that I have tried to make their appointment an awkward time.’ Charlie went on to explain the baiting game honestly:

It is almost like you want an admission from that person to tell you, you are right ... you are working with a theory in your head and you want confirmation from that person that the theory is right and that is the only way to get that ... you are confirming, what you thought all along.

Another practitioner (Holly) added:

I would find myself saying things in a session coz I knew that he would react and I wanted him to react, so I could go ‘see! That is *exactly* what I thought you would say. That is exactly what I thought you would do and you have just proved me right!’

This testing out of a theory seemed to emerge in both focus groups and in some ways created permissions to activate a breach or challenge within a given moment. While these could have been attributed to the practice of risk assessment and the testing of triggers, this did not feature within these discussions, as practitioners acknowledged that these moments were not justifiable and ‘overstepped the mark’. This led to practitioners expressing feelings of guilt and shame (internal markers), that were left unexplored by the practitioner after the event. Even uttering them aloud was not comfortable. These power games posed, on some level, a moral dilemma for the practitioners, who were committed to rehabilitation but were contradictorily using their position to fulfil self-constructed theories relating to offender failure. Theories of failure had been created and needed to be confirmed in order to fulfil practitioners’ feelings of adequacy and personal legitimacy. In these instances, it is argued that, similar to Hacking’s work (1985) they had ‘made up’ an individual

that needed creating and actualising. How practitioners contribute to offender identity is of great interest within these instances and poses the question: if practitioners are constructing an offender's identity by predicting their behaviour, how does this impact upon the processes of desistance? More importantly, it questions how identity transformation is being hindered by such thoughts, which exist in the most professional and competent of practitioners. Such tensions provide a plethora of further research endeavours, which could investigate the processes that underlie identity transformation and the role of relational players over time. It is hoped that such findings propel these endeavours.

With regard to power, it would appear that the practitioner's belief in change was important in how power was presented within correctional relationships. Both players confirmed how there were subtle ways in which this was made clear. While one practitioner described it as a: 'can't-be-bothered approach', others outlined the importance of tone ('If it sounds teachery or judgemental') or language ('It is easy to get personal with the language that we use'). Similarly, Alex (offender) stated:

The way they talk to me and the way you explain things ... Yeah, he's made an assessment, he's not acknowledging me, he knows nothing at all ... It's their attitude, the way they put things across ... your voice changes.

Through analytical discussions with offenders, the feelings of exclusion were present in these instances and there was little opportunity to relate (among other things) to the practitioner. A lack of receptivity from the practitioner could be attributed to insecure attachments (Black *et al.*, 2005), which may consequentially compromise the ability to engage with the offender. There may be a myriad of other variables that are at play here and further work could illuminate such findings. The reputation of some offenders may contribute to individual theories regarding the success or failure of an individual and their ability or motivation to desist from crime. Whatever the reasons may be, this highlights that it is not only the offender that needs engaging, but the practitioner also. A distant practitioner may influence offenders negatively and result in the 'backing away' (Clark, 2005) of offenders that could explain one route to non-compliance. Reflective frameworks within practice provide some scope and space to address this, though greater investment in opportunities to deepen reflection is suggested and will be elaborated upon in Chapter 7.

A final power game that was discussed was that of battling. These were described as 'vicious circles', with one practitioner constructing it as a 'wrestling match of power' and 'power struggle'. Charlie (practitioner) provided some elaboration:

For me, it is about game playing, you start playing the same game they are playing and you shouldn't ... despite what you might hope to do, you

bring yourself down to that level and it is a battle, it is not a battle of wills ... it is almost like manipulation versus counter manipulation.

Phil (offender) shared his perspective of what could be perceived as a battle:

I wouldn't give her any answers to questions she was asking and I wouldn't let her in. For instance, she would say to me: 'What's stopping you committing a crime now?' And I would say: 'Nothing' and then she would say: 'What do you mean?' and I would say: 'I don't mean anything by that' and she would get annoyed by that and I think: 'You're get annoyed by that, but I'm getting annoyed by you asking me the same questions over and over every week.'

Through discussions, practitioners inferred that an exertion of power was not only used to promote change through effective challenging ('pro-social push' (Lewis, 2014b)), but used to fulfil theories regarding the offender's inability to change. It therefore appeared that the use, or misuse of power, was influenced by the practitioner's degree of hope and belief in an offender's capacity or likelihood to change. One practitioner (Richard) stated: 'I want you [the offender] to see ... I need you to see how difficult you are.' A colleague questioned this statement in the focus group and asked: 'Is that about *you* wanting to win or is it, you didn't want *him* to win?' Richard replied, after a moment's pause 'I don't want *them* to win.' Comparatively, Mark (offender) shared with me his first meeting with a practitioner, making references to this 'battle', including aspects of blocking (as indicated in *italic*):

It was almost like two alpha males fighting, but it was with a woman and *I would say something and she would almost try and beat me down with that ... before I've even said a thing, before I had a chance to speak, I started to say something and she was no, no, no, no, cut off.* And then she started coming at me from another angle, it was unpleasant ... like almost battling, and you're not even quite sure what you're battling about, its dominance, that's what you're battling, that's what it is really and that's how it was with her, it was terrible, was absolutely horrendous.

In response to this, offenders talked about ways in which they tried to claw back some autonomy and control from these situations. Mark described how he felt so uncomfortable, that he asked his mother to attend the next appointment with his practitioner. Another offender discussed how he organised his solicitor to advocate on his behalf, with a dispute relating to his probation officer. Comparatively, a practitioner described a similar process within a group setting, where group members gained power from one another by 'ganging up on us.' It is argued, similar to the proposals of Safran and Muran (2003) that individuals move away from the need to relate and instead move towards the need to dominate, in order to gain greater control within

the correctional relationship. Similar patterns infer that ruptures are present within correctional work and greater attention is needed in resolving ruptures, to promote opportunities for growth. Such power games seem to have numerous influences on both players, including feelings of guilt as practitioners acknowledged that their actions were not perceived as 'justified punishment' (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012). Alternatively, one practitioner (Judy) commented on the loss of focus that can arise, if games such as these are played, saying: 'You stop seeing the bigger picture of that person ... it becomes a bundle of negativity, you forget to look at the reasons why they are behaving that way.' It is therefore suggested that more work is carried out to examine ruptures within correctional work, in order to build a greater understanding of how ruptures operate and the extent of their influence. While the work of Safran remains helpful to aid understanding within such discussions, it is felt that some ruptures that exist within a correctional context are different to therapeutic ruptures, due to the power differentials that operate and the additional complexity of relationships.

Part 2: Managing ruptures effectively in correctional practice

It is not only important to be able to recognise ruptures, but also explore how ruptures can be managed and repaired effectively. By reviewing the literature, three key themes arose that will be summarised in turn. First, Safran and Muran (2003) highlighted the importance of preparing for therapeutic relationships and argued that thinking reflexively about the therapeutic bond can strengthen the relationship. In correctional work, particular attention is recommended by Williams (2006) to attend to the power dynamics and the 'them and us' position, as this can act as a barrier within offender rehabilitation (Andrews and Bonta, 2003). In order to successfully address power, practitioners are encouraged to explore their own baggage and 'rediscover and embrace their own painful stories ... which are the catalyst for the ability to empathize with others, who have painful stories of their own' (Williams, 2006: 28). In this respect, being mindful of the practitioner's position and how they see relationships more generally, will allow them to consider the fine-grain processes that occur, throughout a relationship. Day and Ward (2010) recommend that practitioners are mindful of their values and beliefs surrounding offender rehabilitation on a more global level. This may relate to specific offences or practitioners personal struggle with offenders on a broader level. Cook and Doyle (2002) recognised that expectations around therapeutic relationships may need addressing by practitioners. With respect to correctional practice, the context in which relationships are situated can cause some tension, particularly with the relentless shaming of services by the media, when mistakes or 'failings' occur. This research explored how ruptures may be sensitively managed within a correctional setting, in light of the power dynamics that exist, but recognises that in order for a fundamental change in practice to take place, systemic culture needs to accept and understand failure.

The second theme that emerged regarding rupture management was the identification and awareness of ruptures within practice. Safran *et al.* (2011) recommended that practitioners should attend to the feelings that are experienced within a specific therapeutic relationship. Rice and Greenburg (1984) recommended that being attuned to the subtle indicators of ruptures (i.e. withdrawal, avoidance), allows the practitioner to highlight the rupture and address it with the use of clinical wisdom.

Once a rupture is recognised, how the practitioner responds to it is vital in order to secure its resolution. Safran *et al.* (2001: 406) concluded from their extensive work that the ‘negotiation of ruptures in the alliance is at the heart of the change process’. In order to achieve this, Eusden (2011) highlighted the importance of ‘working on the edge’ and being creative to encourage a deep exploration into ways to relate with others. Increasing awareness for all players is the key here. With respect to correctional practice, it is argued that processes of standardisation and manualisation that followed the ‘What Works’ agenda positioned practitioners in a state of inertia that were contradictory to practitioner creativity. This approach is at odds with Eusden (2011) and my proposals (Lewis, 2014a), which advocate that working on the ‘edge of chaos’ may promote the processes of offender change. Within neo-liberal ideology, innovation and creativity are two qualities which are encouraged (Ministry of Justice, 2013) and it is questioned ‘how prepared probation are to free themselves from the rigid approaches adopted thus far, so that innovation and creativity can be embraced’ (Lewis, 2014a: 227).

Safran (1990) highlighted that hostile behaviour from a practitioner may lead to a validation of the client’s unhealthy relational schemata (or rules) and indicate to the client, that the practitioner is ‘emotionally unavailable’. This can result in a vicious cycle that can increase the intensity of the ruptures, influencing treatment failure and attrition. Safran *et al.* (2011) stated that by supporting the client to express their feelings and interpretation of the rupture, the practitioner can genuinely empathise with the client and validate the feelings connected to the rupture. Furthermore, the practitioner can accept responsibility for their contribution, in an ‘open and non-defensive fashion’ (Safran *et al.*, 2011). While traditional rehabilitative values embrace the notion of separating out the behaviour from the individual, the context in which probation now finds itself is frequented by fear, social insecurity and moral panics. As Garland (1990) acknowledged, treatment was no longer carried out for the offender, but the victim and the community. As expressed by Wacquant (2009: 2–3):

Punitive policies are conveyed everywhere by an alarmist, even catastrophist discourse on ‘insecurity’ ... the therapeutic philosophy of ‘rehabilitation’ has been more or less supplanted by a managerialist approach centred on the cost-driven regulation ... paving the way for the privatisation of correctional services.

This leaves probation (and possibly community rehabilitation companies) in an uncertain position, as it finds itself torn between traditional rehabilitative identities and neo-liberal demands. How it can then address the management of ruptures and remain emotionally attached is a great challenge. However, if dealt with appropriately, a rupture can promote improvements in the relationship (Hill *et al.*, 1996), challenge unhealthy relational scripts and initiate new relational experiences (Safran, 1993). It may even be proposed that in light of neo-liberalism, and the devolvement of power away from the state, the relationship between public services and government have ruptured. Trust has broken down, loyalties have been fractured and a tear has occurred on a broader systemic level. In effect, probation has been excluded from the rehabilitative game (or at least aspects of the game) and private organisations have been drawn close. How new relationships emerge over the following years is of great interest and yet, due to the competitive nature of free-market economies, healthy relationships may be compromised.

Focusing back onto individual relationships, Hill *et al.* (1996) argued that in order for relationship improvement to be achieved, an adjustment in the behaviour following the rupture resolution is important. Through rupture management and consequential adjustment, Erskine (1994) recognised the healing nature of this process, which can relate to therapeutic correctional relationships on a broader level. Therapeutic correctional relationships are important as a place for learning, which transmits into those very relationships that can encourage the desistance process (Farrall, 2002). While the findings cement the notion that therapeutic correctional relationships are dynamic, complex and individualised, the mechanisms that underlie such a process have been largely ignored and an investigation into the relational narrative within a correctional context is believed to be of great value. By drawing upon the disciplinary fields where the relational narrative is well documented, it would appear that there are some similarities that may be both useful and applicable to therapeutic correctional relationships. The identification and management of ruptures has advanced psychotherapeutic theory considerably to provide a more considered view of therapeutic relationships. In view of this, the value of this research was evident and a more conscientious consideration of therapeutic correctional relationships was embraced through participatory means.

Figure 6.3 presents a set of principles dedicated to the resolution of ruptures, which transpired from the data in a similar way to that of Safran and Muran (2003) and Shadbolt's (2012) work. These principles are outlined below and elaborated upon in turn, using the data and relevant academic literature.

The principles of rupture management

From the data, there appeared to be numerous ways in which a practitioner could increase their awareness of ruptures. First, as described by Rice and Greenberg (1984), markers in an individual's behaviour can indicate that a rupture has occurred. Within the focus groups, practitioners stated: that 'withdrawal',

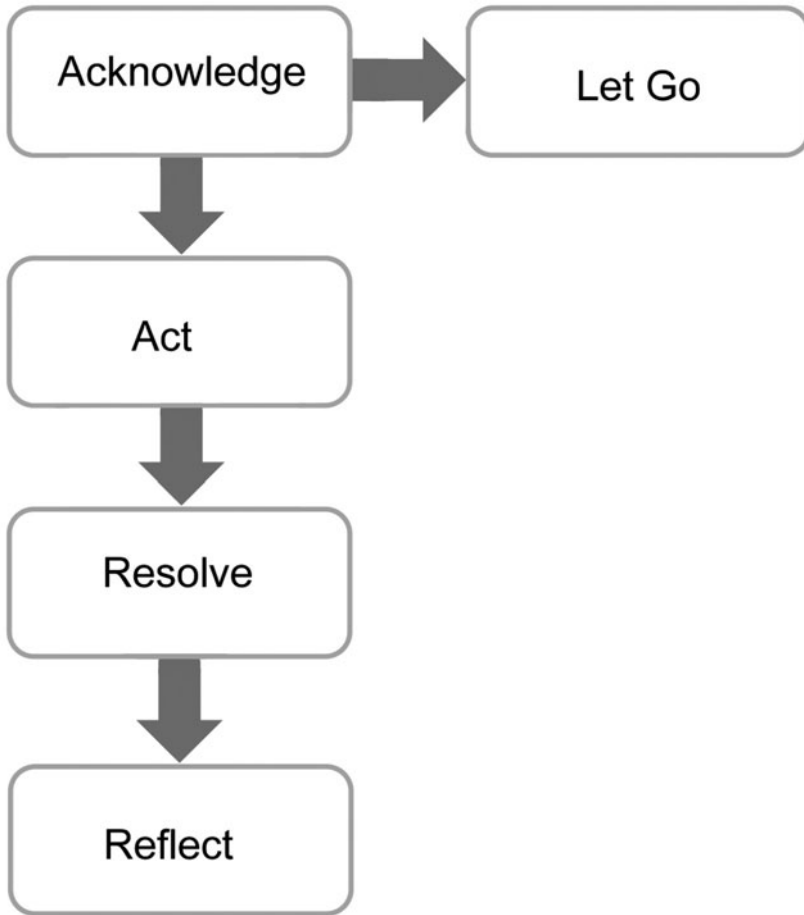


Figure 6.3 The principles of rupture management

‘disengagement’, ‘confusion’ and ‘disinterest’ could all be offender markers of a rupture, one practitioner stating: ‘Everything closes down, just shuts down completely, no honesty, no accountability.’ This suggests that when ruptures occur, there may be a moment where a practitioner is shut out of the offender’s world, as they alter the information flow between themselves and the practitioner. This has several implications for risk assessment during a rupture period and the extent to which the practitioner is seeing a true picture of reality. The practitioner is left in the dark. Charlie (practitioner) described the movement in greater detail:

You can almost feel the distance physically between you and that person, increase. Suddenly they are sitting at the other side of the room, but they are still where they are, but the dynamics change with them.

This is conducive to the work around relatedness and the movement away from the practitioner and toward a position of personal agency or autonomy. Through the focus group discussions, it seemed evident that markers were not necessarily just visible markers from the offender, but could be internal markers that are experienced by the practitioner, through thoughts (e.g. 'how dare he do this') or feelings (e.g. 'frustration', 'anger', 'guilt'). Shadbolt (2012) suggested the importance of an acknowledgement stage of rupture resolution, within psychotherapy. This may include an acknowledgement of an emotion, a thought or behaviour, or even an acknowledgement that something has changed, with respect to dynamics. She stated that feelings of discomfort need attention and a process of self-disclosure may be appropriate (Safran and Muran, 2003; Safran *et al.*, 2011; Shadbolt, 2012). Safran and Muran (2003) elaborated on this, with reference to attending to the rupture with the client: 'drawing attention to the rupture and establishing a focus on the here-and-now' (Safran and Muran, 2003: 144). It is argued that while the attention to ruptures ideally occurs in the here-and-now within correctional practice, the need to establish and develop a mindful practitioner is imperative. Without a reasonable level of reflection, such acknowledgments are more than ambition, they are unrealistic. While some correctional services have recently recognised the importance of relationships and reflection, within supervisory settings, the attention to the finer details of relationships, are lacking. The historic dichotomy of a good relationship or bad relationship needs abandoning. Further training is required for frontline practitioners, as well as senior managers, to assist within this venture. Developing a mindful practitioner is a continuous and long-term commitment and it is important that practitioners feel fully supported in order to meet their potential, as supporter of change. During the analysis phase, an offender commented on the need for practitioner motivation and commitment, in order to carry out such reflection:

Everyone has got the people skills to pull somebody out of bad situations, it's just whether you want it. At the end of the day, you go in, and you meet someone for the first time and it turns out bad ... look at yourself and think: 'is it me?' 'Did I cause that?' You're going to sit there and work it out for yourself, but if you really want to work it out, you can work it.

While motivation is an important ingredient to facilitate effective rupture resolution, the opportunities to explore ruptures are also required. When I shared my findings with the programme's team that participated in the research, a senior manager acknowledged that within a programme's context, time is dedicated to video monitoring, collaborative working and supervisory feedback relating to relational issues. While these discussions suggested that rupture work could occur within a therapeutic context, practitioners within offender management do not have as much time dedicated to this aspect of practice. It is therefore paramount that similar opportunities are created and

developed for all practitioners to ensure that structured time is allocated to relational investment.

It would seem that once these markers are attended to, an acknowledgement and acceptance of the rupture is important. Judy (practitioner) described:

Taking a step back at your behaviour, so, if you look and notice that you are doing all these things, thinking, am I contributing to his behaviour? Maybe it isn't all him ... taking some responsibility for that.

Offenders discussed how they would welcome an acknowledgement of a relational problem from their practitioner. One offender suggested that a practitioner could say: 'Let's start again', another stated: 'Acknowledging it's not working and maybe just starting from scratch and just asking what my needs are', would support the repair process. The expression of 'need' was also recommended by Safran and Muran (2003), as a way to improve self-assertion of the client and provide an opportunity to express their difficulties. From a correctional perspective, the success of this self-assertion is dependent upon the practitioner's willingness to listen and accept what is being said by the offender. Relationships are a right rather than a privilege. Further to this, I argue that power should not be made more visible by the practitioner (i.e. with enforcement or threats of enforcement), as a practitioner grapples with such criticism. These aspects of rupture resolution may be uncomfortable for the practitioner initially, as the acceptance of mistakes can create anxiety, due to the context in which correctional relationships sit. It is acknowledged that the system would need to partake in accepting that ruptures are normal and support individuals as ruptures occur. Integrating such practices immediately may not be appropriate in light of the cultural barriers that currently exist and are evolving, within a neo-liberal context. It is therefore suggested that rupture training would occur incrementally with deeper retrospective reflection integrated within a framework that embraces reflective practice. Through observed practice and peer-learning sessions, the formation of an advanced programme could then develop skills in mindfulness and 'here and now' relational practice.

A final point that was highlighted relating to rupture resolution was the recognition that a recovery may not be possible, in view of the events that have occurred. This is illustrated through the words of an offender:

SARAH: Do you think there's anything that she could have done to recover that relationship?

MARK: No nothing at all, she killed it, murdered it.

From analysing the findings, there seemed to be a threshold of tolerance for offenders, whereupon they were receptive to a rupture repair, and yet there can a point within a relationship where the relationship was not retrievable. Therefore, it is important that the decision to let go, for the benefit of both players is made and that this discussion is collaborative and inclusive, where

possible. From my own professional experiences and from the focus group discussions, 'letting go' can be perceived as a failure by the practitioner and many (including myself) have persevered in spite of this, so as not to admit defeat. Again, the culture that exists within probation seems to promote the ideas of holding on, irrespective of how unhealthy or detrimental this may be for the practitioner or offender. How probation, senior management and practitioners respond and manage failure requires some development in order for this process to be fully embraced. Through greater discussions of relational aspects of practice, these problems may emerge more readily, though with the increased drive towards a more retributive-focused practice, such discourse may be problematic. One practitioner (Joel) noted the importance of 'knowing when to let go of issues', and the need to accept that it is not working. Further research on how practitioners can effectively 'let go' is needed and what support is in place for these difficult endings for both players, due to the sensitivities around this issue. It is almost as if someone needs to be blamed and yet, mutual agreement may lead to growth and new relational experiences, which may have some significance for both the practitioner and offender.

The ability to talk about relationships and ruptures was a prominent theme within the data, as well as the importance of apologies. As Liebling (2005: 208) refers to Tavuchi:

To apologise is to fully recognise the other as an autonomous person with their own worth, to acknowledge that an injustice has been done to them and to seek to restore what has been lost by the unjust act.

With this in mind, Phil (offender) stated:

If they put it [paperwork] to one side for a minute and talk to them, instead of followed every single question on a paper ... Criminals, they don't have people to talk to and when you go to prison you have to act the big hard man and can't show any feelings or anything, because it's all about top dog stuff.

It was clear that being able to talk about relationships, may provide further opportunities for growth and address maladaptive relational schemas (Safran, 1993), though this may be very difficult for numerous reasons. First, the ability to talk about relational problems may be very alien to both players and requires communication skills. To illustrate, Jason (offender) stated:

JASON: I've done a lot of group work and rehab and I ain't afraid to speak if someone is upsetting me. I know how to deal with that without making them feel threatened ... my communication skills have come along in leaps and bounds.

SARAH: So from the sounds of it, you are saying that at some point, that may have been difficult?

JASON: Yeah, [it] would be hard not to come across negative, and that could have escalated into an argument, now I don't need to do that, I ain't that person anymore.

As acknowledged here, there seemed to be a shift in identity from the offender's past and present self, with the words 'I ain't that person anymore'. It also suggested that to some extent, the offender (and practitioner even) needs particular communicative resources and opportunities to participate fully in such difficult discussions. How these discussions are initiated with offenders that may not have such resources is indeed a challenge, though through support and development it is optimistically argued that this is possible. Offenders need to have different means to convey how they may be feeling about a relationship, without the concern or anxiety that this is going to impact upon their situation. Being able to determine whether or not the offender has a genuine reason for such a concern seems to be sometimes lacking, with the assumption that offenders are simply, difficult people. Not always so. To make such a generalisation and negate the practitioner's role within problematic relationships not only marginalises the offender, but silences a voice that needs acknowledgement and respect. This once again reinforces the notion that relationships are a right, rather than conditional or optional.

Another offender highlighted the notion that relational discussions may be easier with certain probation officers:

SARAH: How easy is it for you to talk about a negative relationship that you are having with a probation officer?

MARK: It all depends on how you get on with a probation officer, if I don't think that the probation officer can help me anyway ... if I do confront them about their behaviour and they respond in kind, then I will come across in a aggressive manner and put them in their place, not hit them, say things which I shouldn't. I'm not like that anymore, but I recognise that from my past.

Again, it is interesting to observe the reference to past identity, though this particular discussion implied that some connection needed to be present in order for relational discourse to occur. Put simply, the relationship needed to be 'good enough' (Ross *et al.*, 2008). The suggestion here is that if a therapeutic correctional relationship were absent, a mirrored (and inappropriate) response from the practitioner may be anticipated. This is congruent to the work of Ben-David (1992), who proposed that practitioners are more likely to be punitive if they feel an increased sense of anxiety or insecurity. How practitioners respond to feelings of vulnerability is an element of practice that is rarely discussed. It is suggested that by addressing these vulnerabilities, learning could occur that would be of value and instil a hope of resolution. By uncovering the black box of relationships, through honest and open discussions, I argue that transformations will occur. In relation to this, a final example from an offender

highlighted the fear they experience but also, how this fear is now embedded within their own relational rules around probation officers. Andrew stated:

You got to fear the probation officer, you might have your own opinion on something, you don't want to lose it, just in case you are being told that you are argumentative, rebelling or something like that.

It is felt that contextual power significantly compromises the likelihood that an offender would openly discuss relational problems with ease, or without the fear of detrimental consequences. To complicate matters further, the notion of talking about ruptures may be very daunting to both players, especially if they have not been trained in such an approach and not open to such a notion. Shadbolt (2012) discussed that practitioners within a psychotherapeutic context may feel vulnerable by events such as these and highlighted how ruptures can be filtered, through the lens of culture. In relation to probation culture, the acceptance of making mistakes presents a real tension for future rupture work within the criminal justice system. In order for ruptures and their resolution to be fully integrated within correctional practice, a culture of acceptance needs to embrace the normative nature of ruptures and allow practitioners to voice them, without judgement. The perceived legitimacy of the system is also an important variable with respect to practitioner's readiness to disclose their experiences. Within a broader culture that is quick to judge and swift to shame, it is of no surprise that honest relational discourse is silenced. It is not simply the players that require courage to stand up and acknowledge relational difficulties, but probation practice needs to reassert its position within this neo-liberal climate in which it has found itself.

Within the focus groups that were carried out, I observed very competent and pro-social officers move from describing the passions of their work and belief in change, to honestly sharing the power games that they play with offenders and the emergent guilt that followed such confessions. During that experience, it felt as if a rupture was occurring within that very room; I felt uncomfortable. And yet, through discussions and exploration, it provided opportunities for reflection and growth and created a shared experience for us all. Two practitioners described different pressures, including the difficulty in apologising and probation culture respectively:

I think it takes a lot of courage to come back from that because you might have to sit down and have a discussion on how the relationship has gone wrong from their perspective and whether there is any way to move forward.

(Michael)

Historically, within the service, there is a big thing because you are losing some form of legitimacy (by apologising), but it is about 'you should

never have made that mistake in the first place.’ There has been a recent movement and change in ethos. You are *not* being legitimate, if you *do not* discuss it.

(Charlie)

As demonstrated, it would seem that in spite of the difficulties in apologising and acknowledging relational problems in the ‘here and now’ or retrospectively, both players saw the benefits of: ‘Laying your cards on the table’ (offender). Practitioners highlighted that doing this added legitimacy and acknowledged the humanistic side of the practitioner that is often blurred, due to top-down pressures and culture. Offenders who had negative experiences of correctional relationships, felt strongly about this. One offender (Tom) stated: ‘Just because you’re sitting in that chair doesn’t make you any more powerful than me, it doesn’t mean that you can treat me like shit and I have to accept it.’ One offender (Adam) stated the importance of talking about correctional relationships, but said: ‘In all my time with probation, I have never sat down as I suggested [and talked about relationships].’ He went on to discuss the problems associated with the silencing of the offenders voice in these instances, due to the fear, which raises a real issue that is challenging to address. Through discussions, it was suggested a third individual could be introduced. One offender suggested a member of the community or probation colleague. He discussed the importance of an impartial individual that may be able to support rupture resolutions and help address problems within the relationship. At the data analysis stage, offenders suggested that an ex-offender or mentor could be an appropriate individual, due to the perceived notion that a mentor may understand the importance of therapeutic correctional relationships and hold greater legitimacy compared with the traditional expert (Brown and Ross, 2010). With a current drive by recent UK governments to integrate mentoring opportunities within the criminal justice system, this suggestion may be appealing. It is noted, however, that with additional players within the relational game, complexity will increase further and role clarification would need to be made explicit.

Offenders also discussed how a more inclusive approach could avoid possible ruptures, one offender stated: ‘Instead of them sending you a letter and not saying anything to you, they could get hold of you by phone and give you a chance to explain it yourself.’ Creating a more personalised service, by injecting greater communication seemed to be the consistent desire of the offenders I interviewed.

With respect to other possible ruptures, I asked how practitioners could effectively deal with events of disclosure, which could put the relationship at risk. Paul (offender) stated:

Yeah, I reckon they should sit down and chat to you first, instead of just throwing it straight at the police and just sit down with you and say: ‘I feel the need to contact this authority’ and at first she was saying to me

that I will work with you on that, but then they just stabbed me in the back and threw me in the dark. That is why I didn't trust her or anybody.

Feelings of exclusion and the conditionality of the therapeutic correctional relationship were observed here and in the data more generally, particularly during episodes relating to enforcement. Whilst it is appreciated that in some instances offender inclusion around issues surrounding disclosure may not be possible, the establishment of clear boundaries could ameliorate the likelihood of some ruptures. Questioning the way in which breach may be a more inclusive process, in order to create a learning opportunity for the offender that is meaningful, is contingent upon a therapeutic correctional relationship. How exclusionary practice is addressed within practice causes tensions, though inclusivity may promote compliance at the post-breach stage, allow for successful rupture repair and encourage relational learning. It did not appear that offenders refused to accept the conditions that were required of them, as they acknowledged that enforcement was 'part of the job'. To illustrate, Will (offender) stated:

If they just come and visit you before you got out [of prison], then you can talk to them about these conditions, like living in a hostel. It gives you a chance to talk about it and I've never had that and I think that's where there is a big mess up myself.

Instead, offenders discussed the way in which ruptures could be avoided, giving offenders a place to share their concerns and discuss their problems. While within the realms of reality such concerns may not alter the decisions that are deemed suitable, investing in this time to explore the impact and rationale of such decisions may preserve some aspects of the therapeutic correctional relationship and lead to opportunities for growth.

Joseph (offender) described this as: 'taking it [the offence] off the table' and focusing on the relationship. Through all of these actions, the theme of honesty became a prominent point of discussion. For example, Alex (offender) stated: 'Honesty, honesty is the best policy, for you to turn round and say "Sorry, I've got no choice". That's cool, it's not your fault.' This approach is congruent with Clark's (2005) notion of allocating power to the 'system' through role clarification, though it is at odds with what Garland (1997) described as the movement from offender-centred to offence-centred work, which has been promoted politically during late modernity. It is urged that this contradiction is addressed within current practice to create a system that does not fail to appreciate that an offence does not represent an offender.

The theme of relatedness reappeared with respect to hooks of hope. One practitioner highlighted that by finding a similarity between both players, the offender could move closer to the practitioner, due to the desire to relate once more. Alex (offender) stated: 'Go back to the first spot, revisit. Go back

to the first step, if you've got them on that one thing, once you can get them on that one thing, again, it's about doing what worked. What worked the first time, will the second time.' This is contrasted with a failure to recover a relationship, as highlighted here by Mark (offender):

That first meeting, right from the off, he said 'We've got a lot of different tastes, different style' and I was thinking: 'Why are you saying this? You don't even know me.' I think he went out of his way on the first meeting to put me on a back foot.

This lack of collaboration and 'othering' illustrated the lack of receptivity and exclusionary language that can contribute to the withdrawal from correctional relationships altogether. In contrast, once a period of relational sharing and collaboration has occurred, a period of resolution can be addressed. This period could involve a discussion around what had been learnt from the rupture and how the relationship could move forward. This could be seen as an opportunity to realign boundaries and redress issues of power. Richard (practitioner) reflected on the successful recovery from ruptures: 'The most significant relationships that were shared, had moments of ruptures that were survived, opportunity for change, the significance may have been the process of getting through the rupture'. Opportunities for learning were also identified as bidirectional, as the offender viewed the liberation of their voice as a way in which the practitioner could learn. Adam (offender) stated:

The more feedback that they [practitioners] get can only be good to everyone concerned and it also makes people like me think, I'm not just doing this because I'm told to do this, but they are actually seeking advice to improve and develop services that probation provide.

This building of systemic legitimacy may be a powerful way in which offenders can contribute to service development and improvements. With respect to the current drive towards payment-by-results (Ministry of Justice, 2013), such developments may be vital for the survival of probation services within the public domain. To articulate how this may be conceptualised in probation practice, one offender drew comparisons between his experiences of rupture resolution within a counselling context and then a probation context:

ADAM: Oddly enough, just before I started probation, I was doing a counselling course for about 12 weeks and after the second session, I felt a bit uncomfortable with a particular counsellor. I think it was after one of the sessions that I had with [named probation practitioner] and talking to [named probation practitioner] made me register that maybe her tone was wrong and when I said that about the counsellor and addressed that, I worked out that one trigger point was tone, and to be honest, I said [to the counsellor] 'I've found your tone a bit off-putting and intimidating.'

SARAH: And how did she respond to that?

ADAM: She was very professional, said that she didn't realise she was doing that and within a matter of moments, because it was early on, the tone had slightly altered and she was asking questions in a slightly different way, not so much that they were less direct, as I say, they were less intimidating.

SARAH: What I'm kind of thinking, you can say that to your counsellor, but I'm also thinking for other people (offenders), that may be quite difficult ... I wonder then what do we do when someone can't express that themselves?

ADAM: If they're made aware that there are other ways or mediums that they can refer to, like someone using email or phoning up or even having the option of being able to talk to a colleague within the building. I think if they are made aware of that, then I think more people would probably find it easier to express the issues and concerns that they may have.

This highlighted the importance of structural processes to promote feedback, which could aid rupture resolution and possible learning opportunities. The following passage also describes the benefits that can emerge from a rupture being resolved within a probation context. Sandra (offender) described how a male supervisor had 'rucked' and berated her, regarding her attendance to a session, smelling of alcohol:

SARAH: How was the meeting after that, do you remember?

SANDRA: He put himself across a bit better, but he said, 'I'm sorry about that', just apologised really.

SARAH: And how was that? Getting an apology from him?

SANDRA: I felt better ... yeah, I was down there and then I was up [*points to line on visual*].

SARAH: When he apologised, did that impact upon how you were with him?

SANDRA: Yeah.

SARAH: In what way?

SANDRA: I'd say my anger got better with other people, but I wouldn't say got better with the police.

SARAH: So expressing your anger, without getting aggressive, how was that?

SANDRA: It was good.

This outlined an example of growth that could be accounted for by effective rupture recovery. It is suggested that in order to effectively manage ruptures, practitioners must be aware of them, acknowledge them, take appropriate action to resolve them and use reflective practice to learn from them. It is also argued that these principles need to be addressed responsively due to the individual nature of relationships and sufficient time is dedicated to such processes.

Note

- 1 A 'failure' in this case constituted as a further offence, a negative drug test or negative feedback from another service relating to the offender's behaviour.

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7 Future directions: theory, training and practice

This research embraced a collaborative approach to examine therapeutic correctional relationships within probation and address these findings in conjunction with other correctional settings. The findings illustrated that such relationships are multidimensional, complex and fluid and through their examination, the *dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships* was constructed (see Figure 7.1). This chapter aims to summarise the significant findings from the research and present the *core principles of relational practice*. This chapter will also examine theoretical advancements that may be beneficial in the future, to further these studies. Training and practice will also be addressed, including alternative ways in which relationships can be nurtured and safeguarded, through this knowledge. This chapter will conclude by addressing some of the key challenges and tensions that currently exist within England and Wales and draw on international lessons to develop future relational work.

The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships: a summary

The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships proposes one way in which therapeutic correctional relationships can be understood: through the exploration of its mechanisms. By understanding how relationships work, we become more aware of the implications and significance relative to theory, training and practice.

The relational ‘players’ and the relatedness–autonomy continuum

The practitioner and offender are players within the correctional relationship, whose characteristics, skills and previous experience of relationships impact upon the formation of a therapeutic correctional relationship. Levels of motivation and receptivity of both players are considered important in such relationships, as they determine how each individual will react at any given moment, within the context of that relationship. These players were found to move together in order to relate or move apart in order to exert their own autonomy. Based on the findings, it was argued that players move back and

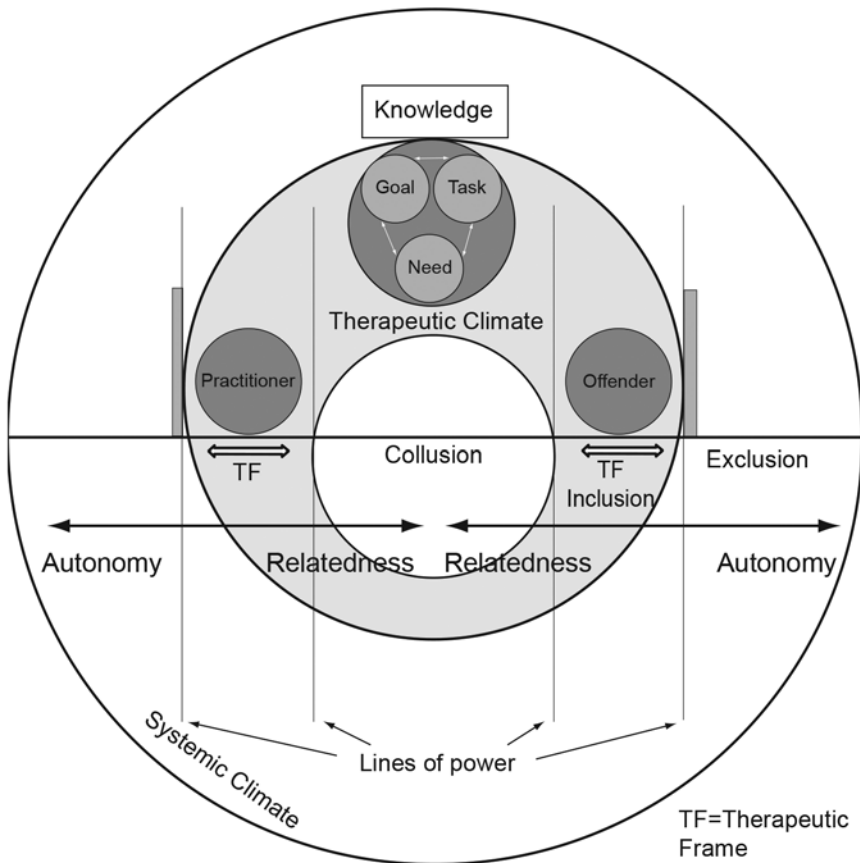


Figure 7.1 The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships

forth along individual relatedness–autonomy continuums, as a response to their interactions. This movement is believed to determine the level of bond that exists between the players, which can be strengthened and weakened over time.

Bordin’s triad and ‘need’

Bordin’s triad featured predominantly in therapeutic correctional relationships and was evident from the interviews and discussions, with both practitioners and offenders. It was found that levels of relatedness (or bond) varied with respect to the degree of agreement relative to goal, task and need. The influence of these components on the therapeutic correctional relationship varied over time, throughout the relational narrative. By exploring these relational narratives, it is suggested that the agreement of goal, task and need were particularly important at the beginning of the therapeutic correctional

relationship, to assist in its formation. If such an agreement were successfully created, I predict that a climate would emerge between the practitioner and offender, which will support desistance and growth in both individuals.

Systemic climate

While the source of power was perceived to be rooted in the practitioner, therapeutic correctional relationships are embedded within a broader systemic climate that also influences the practitioner, including their role and behaviour. Such a climate is partially determined by the values of an organisation, the norms that operate within it and the culture that exists at the time. Power therefore varies in visibility, depending upon the events that occur within the relationship. It was found that state power was represented by the practitioner in different ways, both positively and negatively. This also impacted upon the movement of the players with the likelihood of ruptures. If for example, a practitioner could effectively articulate the difference between an individual as a person in their own right and their behaviour, power could be placed within the role of the organisation and the relationship between the practitioner and offender could be attended to on a more humanistic level. As the criminal justice system becomes increasingly business-minded, values centred on relational work could be under threat. It is strongly suggested that humanistic practice is embraced throughout all levels of the system in order to enable relationships to make their full impact.

Therapeutic climate

A therapeutic climate was identified as a space that was congruent with a therapeutic environment, featuring respect, acceptance, belief, support, trust and legitimacy. Findings relating to ruptures implied that both players are able to move in and out of this climate, depending upon the relational experiences with one another. If, for example, a practitioner behaved in a confrontational or dismissive way, this could move the practitioner away from the offender, allowing the option to the offender to do the same, thus withdrawing from the relationship and creating greater distance. With respect to relational narratives, it was recognised that if practitioners position themselves within a therapeutic climate as a goal within their practice, this could increase receptivity and encourage the offender to also move into the therapeutic climate. The question here is: how can a practitioner remain positive and receptive within a relationship, in light of the challenges that they may face? Historically, offender work can be challenging, testing and problematic, both in terms of offender attitudes and behaviour. This being the case, a practitioner must then consider ways in which they can remain anchored within the therapeutic space. This is not easy for several reasons, including the natural reaction to move away from an individual who is exhibiting disrespectful behaviour, consequentially blocking the opportunity for a positive

relationship. By anchoring the practitioner within the therapeutic frame, the offender will be more inclined to draw closer and express a desire to relate and engage.

Therapeutic frame

The findings relating to the movement of therapeutic correctional relationships indicated that correctional relationships can operate in spaces, where a therapeutic climate is absent. Feelings of exclusion and collusion were referred to regarding these two alternative spaces. The therapeutic frame was formed to represent an inclusive space, which created a distinction between exclusive or collusive spaces that were seen to exist during an overuse or underuse of power. While the ideal position was highlighted to be within the inclusive therapeutic frame, it was recognised that due to ruptures, either player will inevitably move out of this frame at different moments during the relational narrative. This position is therefore ideal but not always possible or sustainable, and for good reason. In the event of a rupture (which resulted in the movement outside of the therapeutic frame), opportunities arise that will provide both the practitioner and offender to learn and develop as people. It is therefore proposed that in the event of a rupture, practitioners strive to return to the therapeutic frame, to encourage growth and recover from the temporary tear in the relationship.

Lines of power are positioned at the boundaries of each climate and it is proposed that when such lines are crossed (by either player), a rupture is more likely. In response to the problems associated with relationships within a correctional context, this dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships begins to address these problems and acknowledges power differences between the practitioner and offender and how these influence their relationships.

Having retraced the relationship over time in Chapter 2, it can be concluded that relationships have shifted and reconfigured, in order to serve the different functions within correctional organisations. In contemporary penal practice, contradictions between care and control exist both on a broad level and within interpersonal relationships. In light of these findings, I argue that the dual function of prison and probation can be fulfilled through the *utilisation* of therapeutic correctional relationships. It could be postulated that building a relationship to facilitate change is nigh on impossible because of such tensions. Indeed, Matthews and Hubbard (2007) argued that the lack of organisational focus on therapeutic correctional relationships impede the practitioner's capacity to develop them. And yet, these findings have suggested that therapeutic correctional relationships can exist in spite of retributive pressures and the contrast of functions. Additionally, such relationships *have the potential* to support desistance and contribute towards personal growth. This does not mean that safeguarding issues around public protection are pushed to one side, but instead risk assessment can be partially fulfilled

through therapeutic correctional relationships, by encouraging offenders to share an accurate picture of their own lives. We are not in control of whether an offender shares his or her life with us. We are not even in control of whether the offender engages with correctional services. But, we can influence the outcome through respectful and collaborative relationships in the same way we can influence this through disrespectful and exclusionary relationships.

The findings relating to relational narratives highlighted the fluidity of relationships and how practitioners can become more informed, with respect to the journeys of such relationships. In the past, the traditional probation caseworker was criticised for a lack of structure to their work and a variance in quality, while the case manager was deemed too standardised and not sufficiently responsive to diversity. Through a reconfiguration of therapeutic correctional relationships, an *individualised yet informed* approach is recommended. This recommendation extends into all facets of criminal justice as relationships can be tailored in such a way so as to meet the functions of it. The principles however, remain intact. This is not to say that relationships should be standardised, but instead, they should be co-constructed through a set of principles which include the offender. It has recently become the case within correctional practice that there is a demand for different strategies to be applied to different groups of offenders, such as extremists or 'dangerous' offenders. However, a bolt-on approach does not address relational matters effectively. Relationships are not a commodity, but should be embedded within practice. Applying a set of flexible principles rather than a standardised script will not only cater for diversity but also address the needs each individual possesses. Working with extremists, for example, may require more time to understand their specific needs, while acknowledging that constructing shared goals may need to start small, in order to meet common ground. The practitioner may need to recognise how receptive (and possibly fearful) they are of working with difficult clients. Expectations need to be set in terms of the time it takes to engage in such dialogue, which in turn will stimulate some changes for them. It is therefore important to note that the relational work is a right, rather than an outcome. It is also important that the sometimes lengthy and bumpy road to desistance is fully appreciated and anticipated. Short-term fixes historically, are not sustainable.

While these findings contribute to frontline practice, it is also important to step back and consider what is occurring on a broader level. With the establishment of community rehabilitation companies within England and Wales, ideas of collaboration are losing their visibility, due to a more decentralised drive towards promoting competitive markets. Weaver (2012) argued that a narrow focus on reducing reoffending will restrict the developments of innovation and create forced competitive alliances. I argue that this position could significantly impact upon the success of rehabilitation and is both unsustainable and unproductive. Some probation practitioners will be required to work as new representatives for community rehabilitation companies, as probation has been broken down and practitioners are dispersed (MoJ, 2013). While the

traditional values of probation have been, to this point, preserved in spite of political focus upon retributive punishment, it is questionable whether they will survive this period of significant organisational change. Conversely, hope in rehabilitative change and personal growth may also be dispersed throughout correctional organisations and if retained and nurtured, could prove most powerful. Through a reimagining of therapeutic correctional relationships and their place within the criminal justice system, services can begin to explore the benefits of such alliances at all levels of the system, including their specific contribution to supporting desistance and addressing recidivism. With the establishment of community rehabilitation companies, new climates are emerging and therapeutic correctional relationships need to be considered in connection with these new climates. It is proposed that such companies consider how relationships can be used and nurtured within the context of their organisation and identify aspects of relational practice which can be improved. Relationships are not only individualised, but are also influenced by the organisation in which they are situated in. Acknowledging the opportunities for meaningful relationships and the obstacles that may reduce the flow of relationships within specific companies will aid relational practice and promote the development of deep relationships. Similarly, specific environments may be more or less susceptible to specific ruptures and learning from one another is recommended. In this sense, relationships within organisations and between organisations are significant. This is particularly challenging in the competitive and transient climate, which has been established through neo-liberalism, but the shared goal of rehabilitation cannot be forgotten. Creating ways in which organisations communicate and collaborate, to achieve their shared goals, may magnify the power of relationships. The question here is: to what extent will organisations relate to one another, in order to facilitate long term growth? Instead, there may be a tendency to exert autonomy and independently strive to fulfil contractual obligations. By doing this, it is argued that sustainable growth will not prevail. Building trust between community rehabilitation companies and the national probation service will create an interconnecting matrix, where relationships can operate and flow. It is too early to assess the extent to which relational work is threatened within this politicised context and the design of the 'system' needs careful consideration as it holds great responsibility. The success of the whole system is as important as the success of its parts.

Transformative relational work can also be developed within prison practice. While more research needs to occur within this area of work, a positive relationship has been recognised to be a significant aspect of effective prison work (Liebling *et al.*, 1999). Liebling *et al.* (1999) acknowledge that 'staff-prisoner relationships are at the heart of the prison system and a stable prison life depends to a large extent on getting these relationships right' (p. 71). She also highlights that little exploration has been carried out within this area, although it is encouraging to see that new work is emerging. Securing positive relationships within a prison context could dampen unrest, build trust and

legitimacy and contribute to a safer climate that facilitates growth (Liebling *et al.*, 2011; Liebling and Straub, 2012). In order to secure quality relational practice, investment needs to be outwardly acknowledged by political and organisational leaders as well as frontline staff. This alignment will not only improve the flow of relationships but provide a climate, which will fully develop them within practice. It is therefore important that unilateral buy-in exists at all levels of the system.

A further objective of this research was to explore for the first time how ruptures operate within correctional relationships. The findings suggested that perceived dishonesty and the visibility of power contribute to the likelihood of rupture occurrence, as well as power games that can be played by both practitioners and offenders. This work has uncovered ways in which ruptures can be effectively repaired, through mutual acknowledgement and appropriate action. The importance of role clarification at the initial stages and throughout the relational narrative were found to be of particular significance when addressing ruptures and reducing the likelihood of them occurring within correctional practice. However, ruptures are inevitable within practice and when such events occur this provides an opportunity for further growth, if they are successfully repaired. My findings conclude that further work is needed within this area in order to reinforce these findings and explore the notion of ruptures in greater detail. The consequences of ruptures may have implications with respect to practitioner legitimacy and inclusionary or exclusionary practice and explorations into these aspects of practice are also necessary. While this project consisted of a relatively small sample, it has initiated the debate and additional efforts are both welcomed and planned for in the future.

It should also be noted that relationships *alone* cannot address offending behaviour, as intrinsic motivation and social capital are also important (Farrell, 2002, 2004). However, I argue that relational work may promote the nurturing of social bonds that could open doors to new opportunities and develop the motivation in an individual to address their offending behaviour. The significance of relationships is not only dependent on the subjective meaning that is attached to them, but also the level of investment they hold and the opportunities to utilise the learning from them. It is proposed that current relational work could be improved through an examination of the mechanisms that underpin therapeutic correctional relationships, which contribute to behavioural change. While the othering (or distancing) of offenders has been acknowledged within penal discourse (Garland, 1990), it is suggested that several *commonalities* exist between practitioners and offenders, which are largely ignored within contemporary discussions. Both practitioners and offenders may lack receptivity to a therapeutic correctional relationship and consequently may use unhealthy means to exert their own agency. Both players may make mistakes on a relational level and then react in ways that are not effective and do not support desistance. While practitioners have greater opportunities to exert agency, as a representative of the state, offenders also hold agency as their involvement with correctional services are

determined by their decisions and choices. The following principles are presented to embrace creativity and individual theory-building, by encouraging humanistic relationships, through a mindful and reflective approach. As Bien (2008) has rightly acknowledged, the skills of a good practitioner are: 'deceptively simple to explain, but not easy to practice' (p. 38). It is hoped that the following recommendations provide greater clarity on the ways in which this research can be practically applied to correctional practice in the future.

The core principles of relational practice

1 Prepare for a therapeutic correctional relationship

Time needs to be dedicated by the practitioner (and criminal justice system) to prepare for therapeutic correctional relationships. From the findings, both players appeared to experience some negative emotions prior to a relationship commencing and if these are not addressed early, may influence the likelihood of a therapeutic correctional relationship forming. Preparing for a therapeutic correctional relationship will maximise the likelihood of an offender considering the practitioner as legitimate and this may consequently encourage the offender to move into the therapeutic frame. There is a tendency within correctional work to carry out a significant amount of paperwork during these initial stages and start interventions promptly, invariably due to the anxieties held by the practitioner when attempting to achieve target attainment. To reduce this anxiety, the practitioner may consider the need to structure in time during the early stages of a relationship, to develop a better understanding of the offender and secure a therapeutic correctional relationship if possible. Practitioners need to be mindful of their own values and feelings relating to those they work with and the offences that they have committed. While 'making up' and constructing the offender prior to an appointment may be unavoidable, how a practitioner manages their preconceptions is of great significance. The first meeting with an offender is one of the defining moments within that relationship and a recognition of this is important.

2 Set clear boundaries and clarify role

The establishment of clear boundaries and the clarification of role was a prominent finding within the research and a major facet of correctional work. These objectives need to be consistent and clear. Considering the idea of separating out different elements of practice may assist in achieving this objective. For example, separating out the practitioner (as an individual), the relationship (as a place for growth) and the state (as the source of power), may enable the practitioner to consider where negotiation can occur and where compromise is not possible.

A discussion relating to role and boundaries is recommended within the initial meeting and the need to reiterate aspects of the correctional role

through the relational narrative, is advised. How this discussion is facilitated is as, if not more, important than the words that are spoken. A demonstration of a genuine belief in the offender and a willingness to work with them needs to be conveyed, as well as an explanation of the reasons why such boundaries are put in place.

3 Promoting an engaged practitioner and engaged offender

Weaver (2013) highlights that the practice of reciprocity (or exchange) generates the bond between practitioner and offender and allows 'relational goods' (such as trust, respect, care and mutual concern) to flourish. Promoting an engaged practitioner can be initially achieved through alterations to the recruitment process that embrace the offender voice and invites offenders to partake in the interviewing of future staff. Through this process, it is argued that receptivity may be evaluated to some extent, at the point of recruitment. This is not to say that skills in mindfulness and deep-level reflection need to be fully developed at this point, but that potential employees are receptive to the ideas and values behind correctional practice. As previously discussed within the context of supporting young offenders in desistance, it is important to 'get the right people on the boat' (see Judd and Lewis, 2015: 10). Once employed, it is recommended that practitioners are provided with opportunities to discuss relational experiences in a safe environment. Training opportunities may support these processes, as continuous professional development is required to sustain such practices and maintain the belief in offender change. Raynor and Robinson (2005) argued that systemic learning can be achieved through initial and in-service training to promote relational potential. Probation training provisions still hold great uncertainty within the current political climate and a thorough examination of initial training opportunities needs to occur to ensure that relationship expectations, personal skills and theoretical knowledge are established and well integrated. It is argued that these should be integrated *with* continuous professional development opportunities, to avoid duplication and promote cohesive learning.

It is suggested that the practical use of the dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships is used as a tool for communication, with respect to practitioner practice. If practitioners regularly reflect upon their position and how it may differ with different offenders, this will help develop practitioner's skills, which could assist in increasing the awareness of relational postures. The focus here is not only on engaging the offender, but engaging the practitioner also. It is recommended that engagement initiatives are embraced as reflective practice remains central to correctional work, through a mindful approach that could be utilised within both prisons and probation. Hick (2008) proposed that through a more mindful approach, deeper listening and awareness can occur and a development of relational knowledge can be achieved. It is felt that practitioners would be receptive to this approach and also be interested

in relational developments, in light of the welfare-based values which still operate within front-line work invariably. It may also maintain their hope in change and preserve their belief in the work that they perform.

It is suggested that by supporting the practitioner to move into the therapeutic frame, the offender will be more inclined to edge towards a more engaged position. To promote this possibility, creating individual theories relating to specific relationships will nurture and strengthen the relationship further. Making observations relating to questions such as the following examples may facilitate this exploration:

- When is he/she (the offender) most engaged?
- Where is he/she most comfortable?
- How does my tone and manner impact on our relationship?
- When best does he/she respond to me?
- What experiences has he/she previously had that may impact on our relationship?

If an offender does not engage on any level, considering alternative methods of practice may break down some of these boundaries. This could include walking together rather than sitting, focusing on knowledge *they* possess, or finding a shared commonality. To support this sometimes difficult process, it is suggested that knowledge relating to the relational narrative may be utilised to provide new insights. Through the use of peer-learning opportunities, practitioners can discuss ways in which an offender may be encouraged (or de-anchored), through the use of hooks.

4 Acknowledge and actively resolve ruptures

This recommendation is based on the findings relating to rupture identification and resolution. The dynamic model of therapeutic correctional relationships may again support practitioners in identifying how an offender has moved in reaction to a rupture and the internal and external markers that have emerged and ways in which the rupture can be repaired. Through additional research and relational training opportunities, it is hoped that additional guidance can be provided for practitioners, which could support these processes.

Within a psychotherapeutic context, Harper (1989a, 1989b) has explored the possibilities of rupture resolution training and found that it had a significant impact on client outcome. Coding systems have been designed to assist in detecting ruptures, such as the Rupture Resolution Rating System, which has been developed by Eubanks-Carter *et al.* (2009). This method relied on observing video footage of an individual session, which could be integrated easily within observed supervision sessions within a probation context. Limitations of such methods have been highlighted by the authors, as there are differences between what the client is reporting and the observations that are conducted. This signifies the challenges of recognising ruptures within

practice. However, embracing the notion that relationships are discussed as part of practice is highly recommended.

Within the psychological discipline, alternative methods to gain relational insight within practice has taken place. Langer (2000) proposed using mindfulness as a way to create openness and a greater appreciation for the 'here and now'. This holds some irony within the field of rehabilitation as mindfulness is becoming a popular technique within psychological interventions with offenders, to increase their understanding and awareness of what is taking place at the present moment. And yet, practitioners are not encouraged to develop such skills within their own work, as reflective practice remains the priority. Such an approach may allow practitioners to perceive new information that they may not have realised previously, by attending to their own state of being as well as the interactions and cues they are experiencing from the offender. Wolstenholme (2002) stated that mindfulness can create a space to observe reactions and help the practitioner in noticing what is taking place at a given moment. Further to this, Jennings and Greenburg (2009) recognised that mindfulness can enable educational practitioners to respond in a calmer manner, rather than acting defensively. This may be of particular benefit when working with offenders with respect to managing challenging behaviour, or receiving feedback from the offender, regarding their own behaviour. Presenting themselves as confrontational or defensive could contribute to an offender responding in such a way that is antisocial, which may result in either a lack of willingness within the session or future non-compliance. A further benefit that can arise by being a more mindful practitioner is the ability to view and appreciate the flow of the relationship and gauge the distance between themselves and the offender. By encouraging feedback and discussing the relationship with the offender, greater awareness can be nurtured that may put the offender at greater ease and allow them to open up. As an example, Chogyham and Dechan (2002) proposed that the underlying root of anger is that of powerless or fear. If anger is viewed in this way and placed within the context of correctional work, responding to anger may differ for the practitioner, who may learn to understand the reasons for a reaction, rather than challenging (or fuelling) the behaviour immediately. These findings not only illustrate that a greater understanding of emotional responses could enhance quality within practice, but could also lead to an offender moving closer towards the practitioner, to engage with the process of personal growth.

It is encouraging to see that probation practice has begun to recognise the importance of meaningful relationships, since the establishment of the Skills for Effective Engagement and Development Initiative (SEEDS) within most probation services. SEEDS emphasises structured supervision and enhancing the skills necessary to build meaningful relationships (Hylton, 2013). However, Hughes (2012) highlighted the importance of therapeutic elements to the practitioner's role and the need for more probation training in motivational counselling skills. Rex and Hosking (2013) identified additional benefits of SEEDS, including the attempt to increase public confidence in community

sentences and develop legitimacy on broader levels. With respect to ruptures, it is also paramount to understand that tensions and temporary tears within relationships do exist and that a culture is created that accepts this and recognises the value of repairing such tears. SEEDS was influenced by international studies, such as Taxman's work, which highlighted that more enabling environments achieved lower rearrest rates. This drive toward creating a more positive climate within supervision was also acknowledged in Canada by Bonta *et al.* (2010), who recognised the need of observed practice and constructive feedback around supervision. I believe that such practices can be developed further to encourage deeper reflection and the practice of mindfulness, to help support the process of building therapeutic correctional relationships and identifying and resolving ruptures. Ixer (1999) proposed that we need to go *beyond* reflection and partake in greater critical analysis, as this not only empowers the practitioner, but assists them in feeling confident in building their own relational theories with offenders. Furthermore, by providing greater guidance around informal interactions may be of benefit within other rehabilitative environments, to support practitioners with knowledge of how shorter interactions can be used as opportunities to assist desistance.

5 Considering the forces of relationships

While it is argued that the ideal position for both players is within the therapeutic frame, it is not recommended that once there, the relationship is secure. At this point in the relational narrative, it is proposed that offenders need to be challenged (i.e. pushed), as well as supported (i.e. pulled). It is suggested that these movements present some risks (as the offender may move too close or withdraw completely), but these movements hold greater significance with respect to personal growth. This motion of pushing and pulling needs to come at the right time within the relationship and at a point when the therapeutic correctional relationship has deepened and the offender perceives the practitioner as someone who holds legitimacy. Being mindful of the relationship and the position of the offender within the relational narrative may assist the practitioner in knowing when a 'pro-social push' is appropriate (Lewis, 2014c). Prior to this, challenging behaviour is still important, but in a more indirect fashion, through the use of techniques such as rephrasing. It has been noted previously that offenders value a direct practitioner (see Lewis, 2014a, 2014b) and yet, the foundations of a therapeutic correctional relationship need to be established prior to any direct challenging, in order to achieve their fullest effect.

6 Promoting an empowering end

An empowering end requires the practitioner to genuinely highlight the achievements of the offender, instil hope in change and acknowledge the progress that has been achieved. It is also a time when the practitioner can

reflect with the offender on their relationship. The time to undertake such a task may vary depending upon the offender, though it is argued that this will prepare them for the ultimate rupture, as they exit from the relationship permanently. In the event that the relationship has been challenging, this can also be discussed, particularly if some of the challenges have been overcome. Like desistance, relationships are rocky and acknowledging and reflecting upon this can gain valuable insights with respect to new relational learning.

The future direction of relational work holds numerous challenges. Wiseman and Tishby (2014) identify advancements within psychotherapy that hold relevance within correctional practice, both theoretically and practically. There is a need now to continue to research the different components and the processes of therapeutic correctional relationships. How we might measure and observe relationships and ruptures, may provide us with greater knowledge relating to the curative nature of relationships and the impact they have on desistance. New and alternative ways need to be adopted to consider how relational training and practice might feature in the future, at all levels of the system and across different disciplines and institutions. Working collaboratively with practitioners in the field, offenders, academics and politicians, needs to take priority.

Challenges and possible solutions in relational practice

Measuring relationships

Challenges relating to measuring relationships exist on much broader levels, particularly to relational practice (Llewellyn *et al.* 2014). Crocker (2014) acknowledges that statistics may *create* social realities, rather than measure them. Further to this they highlight that relational approaches to justice are difficult to capture as a bigger imagination is required to gain a fuller insight into the relational aspects of justice. Within this context, success (or failure) cannot be limited to one individual, due to the links between relationships themselves and the number of correctional relationships an individual may experience at any given time. Growth within a relational context may activate or deepen a therapeutic correctional relationship. It may also provide broader successes with family and friends, that are not considered or captured. As Llewellyn *et al.* (2014: 297) state:

Attention to the multiple and intersecting relationships in which we live makes clear the ways in which wrongdoing causes harm not only to the individuals involved but also to the connections and relationships in and through which individuals live.

They go on to state that a focus on relationships is a central concern of justice as relational justice focuses on equality as its core goal. Characteristics associated with a therapeutic correctional relationship can therefore be embedded into different aspects of the social fabric, through an inclusive and

participatory approach. This could be acted out by getting offenders involved at a policy level (e.g. like in Norway and the establishment of KROM),¹ collaborative research (e.g. CREDOS)² and practice. A focus on joined-up endeavours and value in the personalisation of criminal justice, may not only enable systems to build legitimacy, but provide feelings of solidarity and collaboration, breaking down the ‘them and us’ culture. Embracing the rich learning from a variety of perspectives and being open to alternative and new ways of practice can only strengthen international relations using evidence-based policy. Further to this, considering how these transformative initiatives can be measured and acknowledged within criminal justice, can only promote the important of relational-focused practice and policy internationally.

Justifying a relational focus to punishment

Moran and Jewkes (2014) have discussed the importance of nurturing environments within a penal context, focusing upon creating therapeutic environments that facilitate growth and healing. Moran (in press, cited in Moran and Jewkes, 2014: 350) purports that: ‘therapeutic landscapes reflect a sense of place as relational, and a holistic model of “health” that encompasses the physical, emotional, spiritual, societal and environment’. Moran and Jewkes (2014) draw on prisons in Iceland and Norway that are more responsive to these ideas, discussing how nature and connecting with the environment may provide therapeutic benefits. Applying such an approach within England and Wales, and internationally with the US is possible, *if* presented as a legitimate idea that focuses upon the societal gains of such a decision. In Moran and Jewkes’s (2014) article, Webster (2010) argues that the problem with adopting such an approach in the US is difficult because it does not apply to the retributive model of punishment. Surely the problem does not lie in the notion of designing an institution that could facilitate desistance, but more on the myopic problematic focus on retributive punishment that is becoming increasingly popular? Within a recent article in the *New York Times* (Benko, 2015), it is highlighted that if the focus is relating to cost alone, Halden Prison in Norway is expensive. However, Halden prison is cost-effective due to the reduction in future crime and societal harm. In a similar vein, a more toxic environment has been associated with greater violence and hostility, pitiful reoffending success and burnout in prison staff (see Griffin *et al.*, 2012). Burnout in staff not only impacts on the practitioner, but on those around them and can be seen as ‘contagious’ within an organisation (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Griffin *et al.* (2012) highlight that supervisors of frontline prison practitioners can themselves be open, supportive and approachable or closed, distant and uncaring. This highlights the premise that while relationships between prisoners and prison staff are of significance, intra-relational processes, between staff and their managers also hold significance. It is self-evident that any individual, be that practitioners or managers, can be receptive or closed to such relationships. This in turn impacts upon the culture of an

organisation and the degree to which relationships flow within it. As stated by Lambert *et al.* (2012: 938): 'Trust is a valued resource of any organisation and is a necessary component of a positive, healthy work environment.' Once again this reiterates the notion that creating a therapeutic climate, which enhances growth, holds great significance within closed and open spaces.

In the same way this research aimed to address the marginalisation of offenders within research, through its methodology, I argue that a similar approach needs to occur within relational practice. Within contemporary penal practice and the silencing of the 'other', offenders require advocacy in the same way that advocacy is central to deep therapeutic correctional relationships. At the end of one offender interview, I thanked him for his contributions and he said: 'I feel like a rock star, like I've been thrown out of a boy band and I'm reminiscing, all I need is a microphone.' Upon reflection, this comment signified a great deal to me; that I achieved an environment where the offender was placed as the 'expert' and that offenders *want* to be heard, but may not necessarily have the opportunities to project their voice. Ultimately, offenders hold the key to the relational revolution and yet the role of the offender is largely ignored. Within practice it is important to provide offenders with ways in which they can give back to alleviate feelings of social exclusion and reconsider their identity. By doing this, *we* are creating opportunities that support desistance. I urge the national probation service, prison service and community rehabilitation companies to consider how an 'insider's' perspective can benefit service delivery, through the co-construction of future practice and I personally intend to actively promote such an approach in the future.

In order to achieve greater quality within correctional practice, senior management needs to support practitioners but hold them to account if relational practice becomes unhealthy. Contemporary penal practice holds many challenges for relationships due to systemic structures that are time-bound, forced, lack negotiation and are situated in a culture of control. The data from this research found that in spite of this, therapeutic correctional relationships are achievable and can survive within this challenging context. From this, it is more the challenge that societal and political climates change, in order to facilitate positive relationships. Put simply, we need to fully embrace and believe in the notion that offenders have the right to be treated like people, if positive progress is to be made. The media may argue that offenders should be punished heavily and 'feel it'. Politicians may present the need to be 'tough on crime', thus justifying the need to put offenders in physical and virtual cages. The fact remains that offenders are people. If this premise is accepted, then building good relationships is essential and this is what we must strive for, if you want offenders to move away from crime and adopt the position of 'reformed citizen'.

Furthermore, relational ways of working may continue to propel the relational revolution within criminal justice on a number of platforms. Duff (2001) outlined the importance of communicative theories of punishment that have a relational focus. While a retributive element to punishment addresses

what is deemed as proportionally relevant, a forward-focusing element to punishment needs greater attention, with the goal of repairing damaged relationships by nurturing and accepting the offender's right to be socially reintegrated, once retribution has been completed (Ward and Salmon, 2009). Ward and Salmon (2009) argue that imposing punishment, whether it be retributive or restorative, should be carried out in a respectful manner. This is essential for future success, which focuses on inclusivity and redemption. In this sense, restorative justice is a form of rupture resolution between the offender, the victim and the community and may facilitate healing and growth, through the mechanism of administering punishment. Zehr and Mika (1998) propose that an offence creates a rupture through its violation of people and communities. By exploring social justice through a relational lens, advancements can be made that have the capacity to educate communities and provide a more inclusive and cohesive approach to punishment. This is not to say that all punishment can be resolved in this way, but suggests that relational theories can be used as a way to address relational problems on a larger scale.

Swimming against the punitive tide

On a global level, the punitive turn as identified by Pratt (2002), has been gaining momentum. Relationships between the offender and practitioner, both within prisons and the community, seem to be losing credibility for politicians, on the assumption that they are too 'soft'. In the extreme scenario, relationships have been completely removed from institutions (such as super-max prisons), leading to what I would argue to be a toxic environment, which, creates anger rather than growth. Pratt (2011) highlights the focus upon human storage within American prisons stating how prisoners may only receive a five-minute phone call every 90 days to loved ones. Some prisoners experience significantly lengthy periods in solitary confinement, creating inhumane conditions that are devoid of contact with other people. These conditions may not only prevent meaningful relationships within prison, due to the regime in which has been adopted, but prevents social bonds with the outside that are so significant, especially regarding desistance. Returning to probation in England and Wales, some private probation services have installed 'cash-machine style kiosks for offenders to report in without seeing an officer' (Travis, 2015). What we are seeing is relational practice being removed in order to save money.

The last coalition government proposed that professionals are entrusted to achieve positive results (MoJ, 2013). However, constraints now exist which disqualify probation from this political game. Probation has been distanced away from aspects of rehabilitative work, an area of practice that was at the heart of the service historically, since its establishment. A reinvigoration of relational rehabilitation will ensure that future practice adds greater value, upholds the welfaristic values that are characteristic to correctional services and support legitimate and sustainable practice, which encourages positive change. As I have shared my research, both nationally and internationally,

practitioners immediately related to the findings, by applying them to their own experiences through the adoption of new relational language. While these elements of practice are commonplace within probation, this research provides new and alternative ways of understanding relationships and how they shape practice. It is therefore argued that these findings could contribute to practice development, by considering relational work through an evidence based lens. 'Common sense' policy is simply not good enough. Co-constructing the future with offenders will continue to promote the offender voice, affording offenders the opportunity to give back and propel a 'relational revolution' (Weaver, 2011, 2012). As Morin (2006: 11) states: 'all the great transformation processes started with deviations'. With this in mind, relationship work needs to be rearranged once more to promote change in the future and create safer societies.

Stepping back further, the state climate in which institutions sit, holds additional tensions with respect to the relational revolution. As neo-liberal practices flourish, relationships within criminal justice institutions and services ebb and flow and this can be linked to the notion of liquid modernity, as described by Bauman (2000). Over the past decades, prison and probation services have been pushed away by the state. Burke and Collett (2010) discuss how many in the probation service experienced a sense of betrayal and alienation prior to 1997, after the promotion of prison under Michael Howard and then outlined how within the third term of the Labour government, probation experienced a 'dagger in the heart' (p. 238). Such a descriptive would highlight that ruptures may take place on larger levels, as bigger systems are excluded and distanced. This may certainly be the case under the recent Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda when probation were informed that they themselves could not bid for new rehabilitative services that were being established, to cater for offenders that were deemed medium and low risk. Figure 7.2 highlights how, during this time, state-run services were distanced away from the state as free-market economies were drawn closer and included within the new political plans.

Concluding thoughts

It is hoped that this book has illuminated the significance and power of relationships. To develop practice and create quality in correctional work, a relational-focused approach is proposed for serious consideration and embraced, in light of these doctoral findings. Embraced in front-line practice, embraced in driving new relational methodologies and embraced throughout the criminal justice system and beyond. Political tensions and the obsession with popularity rather than social justice creates many obstacles, but it is strongly felt that if individuals understand the significance and benefits of positive therapeutic relationships, they would have a greater appreciation of them and deem them more legitimate and therefore more acceptable. A relational revolution has the potential to transform criminal, penal and social

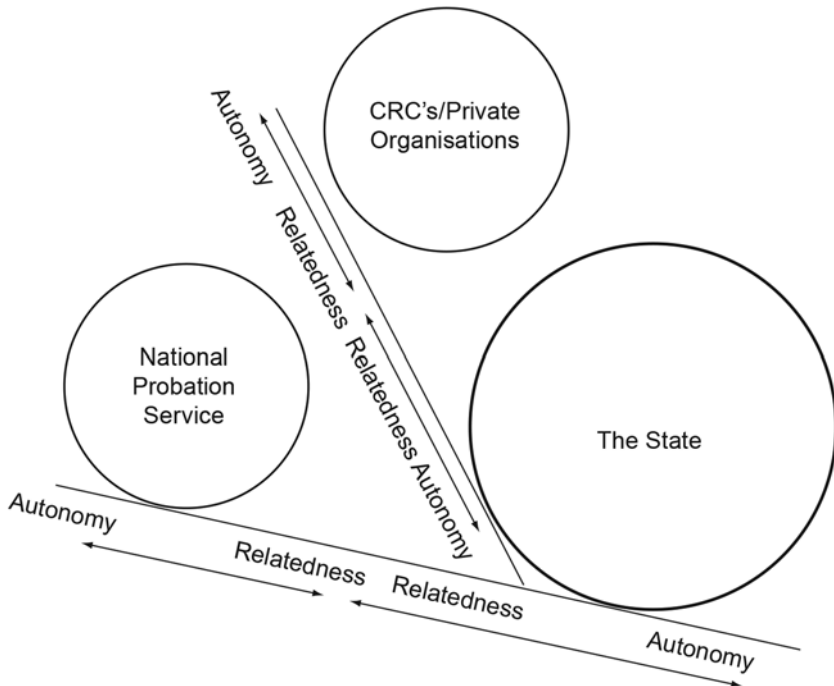


Figure 7.2 A representation of macro-relationships within correctional work

justice and the more we focus on relationships, the larger this transformation can be. In spite of the tribulations associated with rehabilitation, let us turn to relationships once more, with commitment and hope.

Notes

- 1 KROM was founded in 1968 and represents the Norwegian Association for Penal Reform, a non-governmental political organisation and pressure group. See www.krom.no/hva-er-krom for details.
- 2 CREDOS is an international network of researchers who explore offender supervision.

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