

**Understanding and unraveling the Therapeutic
Correctional Relationship, using a participatory
approach.**

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of the Professional Doctorate in Criminal Justice of the University of Portsmouth.

**Sarah Louise
Lewis**

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how relationships that promote behavioural change are conceptualised and de-constructed within Probation practice in England and Wales, investigating the relational narrative and temporary tears in the relationship (ruptures). The project embraces a participatory approach, involving probationers¹ and practitioners within the design, implementation and analysis of the research to acknowledge the benefits of listening to the “*offender voice*” within relational research. Seventeen Probation practitioners participated in focus groups and eighteen probationer interviews were undertaken, with the use of visual aids to enhance engagement. In light of the findings, the Dynamic Model of Therapeutic Correctional Relationships (TCRs) is presented to conceptualise TCRs, through an examination of its mechanisms. The relational narrative is de-constructed and five stages emerged from the data, these being; relational pre-conceptions, activating the TCR, developing the TCR, sustaining/maintaining the TCR and preparing to end the TCR. During each stage, it was found that certain aspects of practice could promote the development of TCRs over time. Finally, the findings suggest that relational ruptures exist within Probation practice and the management of ruptures are addressed through a set of principles. These principles promote the reparation of ruptures through acknowledgement, action, reflection and review. This thesis concludes with the proposal that practitioners need to “*play*” a new relational “*game*” within Probation practice, to encourage the development of TCRs and support the processes of change.

¹ The term “*probationers*” was adopted throughout this piece and is used here to mean “*individuals who attend Probation.*”

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Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CJS= Criminal Justice System

CPD= Continuous Professional Development

CR= Correctional Relationship

CRCs=Community Rehabilitation Companies

ICJS= Institute of Criminal Justice Studies

MoJ=Ministry of Justice

NOMS= National Offender Management Service

PO=Probation Officer

PQF= Probation Qualification Framework

TCR= Therapeutic Correctional Relationship

TF=Therapeutic Frame

TR= Therapeutic Relationship

SEEDS= Skills for Effective Engagement and Development

SGS= Sir Graham Smith

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The significance of this journey is hard to express in words and it is equally difficult to truly represent my thanks to those that have helped me throughout this professional doctorate. I can honestly say that I have loved every moment of this project, 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.

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RECORD OF DISSEMINATION

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
Jan 2012	Winter School Conference (University of Portsmouth): Presented pilot study findings (Lewis, forthcoming).
June 2012	British Conference of Criminology (2012) (University of Portsmouth): Barriers of a working relationship within Probation Practice.
Oct 2012	Home Office: Formal dissemination of Sir Graham Smith (SGS) Award findings.
Nov 2012	LDU conference (Portsmouth Probation): Presented to practitioners and senior management: Findings of SGS Award in relation to creative rehabilitation.
Jan 2013	LDU conference (Hampshire Probation): Presented to Probation practitioners and senior management: Findings of SGS Award in relation to creative rehabilitation.
Jan 2013	Probation Qualification Framework (PQF) workshops: SGS results integrated into Probation teaching.
Feb 2013	HEI Meeting with Sue Rex: Discussed SGS Award and focus group findings in respect to the future of Probation Training.
Mar 2013	ICJS Undergraduate Lecture: Presented SGS Award findings in respect to employability within the CJS and creative rehabilitation.
Oct 2013	Post Graduate Conference (University of Portsmouth): Presented SGS Award findings.
Jan 2014	ICJS Student Conference: Relationship Narratives in Probation.
Feb 2014	Dissemination of doctoral results to Portsmouth Probation.
Feb 2014	Presented doctoral results to Probation Directorate and practitioners in Oslo, Norway.
April 2014	Lewis, S. (2014a). Responding to Domestic Abuse: Multi Agented Systems, Probation Programmes and Emergent Outcomes. In A. Pycroft, & C. Bartollas (Eds). <i>Applying Complexity Theory: Whole Systems Approaches in Criminal Justice and Social Work</i> . Bristol.

	Policy Press.
June 2014	Lewis, S. (2014b). Learning from Success and Failure: Deconstructing the working relationship within Probation practice and exploring its impact, using a collaborative approach. <i>Probation Journal</i> .
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1. INTRODUCTION

The position of the relationship between probationer and practitioner has shifted throughout Probation history. This relationship and the values that underpin it, have been configured and re-configured and yet, interpersonal processes still remain a significant aspect of rehabilitative work today (Burnett, 2004). Within this context, relationships can be conceptualised 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 (TRs) that promote behavioural change has many tensions within a correctional context and this doctoral work aims to affirm the notion that Therapeutic Correctional Relationships (TCRs) are possible, in spite of these issues. I contend throughout this thesis that Correctional Relationships (CRs) account for *all* relationships that exist between a probationer and practitioner, irrespective of quality. A TCR however, is associated with a CR that nurtures behavioural change and is defined as a collaborative relationship that is founded upon therapeutic qualities, such as genuineness, empathy, acceptance and positive regard (Rogers, 1967; Miller and Rollnick, 2002). Research in this area is relatively silent upon how Probation practitioners can effectively support change and Matthew and Hubbard (2007) question whether some practitioners believe this to be an aspect of their role. Whilst it is acknowledged that several variables support processes of desistance, this thesis focuses upon relational issues characteristic to Probation. I will argue that TCRs can aid the practitioner in supporting the processes of desistance and contribute to aspects of risk assessment, through the “*playing*” of a new relational

“*game*”. This “*game*” focuses upon the micro-processes of TCRs, how they develop over time and how they can be safeguarded within practice.

Aims of this Thesis

The aim of this doctoral study is to critically conceptualise and deconstruct the TCR between Probation practitioner and probationer, using a participatory approach.

In light of this aim, the objectives of this doctorate are:

1. To critically consider what is understood by a TCR within a Probation context.
2. To examine the relational narrative, specifically considering what factors contribute to the development of a TCR.
3. To conceptualise interpersonal ruptures within Probation practice.
4. To consider ways in which relational work can be developed within Probation practice.
5. To embrace the “*offender voice*” throughout all facets of the research, including the design, participation and analysis.

The Significance of Relationships

With the wealth of academic pursuits relating to relationships within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) (e.g. Dowden and Andrews, 2004; Rex, 1999; Burnett and McNeill, 2005; King, 2013), it is hard to dispute the significance of relationships within Probation 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 a probationer within a supervisory context, which may increase the likelihood of positive change

through the development of a healthy bond between practitioner and probationer. 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 a probationer (Robinson, 2005). Whilst a “*positive*” relationship may support processes of desistance, it may also sustain such processes. Appleton (2010) concluded from her work that a “*good*” CR 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 TR can contribute to offender self-transformation and positivity, as well as nurturing feelings of empowerment. These insights suggest that *certain* CRs may have significance within different aspects of Probation work, and may contribute to rehabilitative aims. This thesis reaffirms the importance of constructing a more therapeutic stance within correctional work, to meet the functions of contemporary Probation practice².

The structure of this thesis adopted the recommendations of Elliot, Fischer and Rennie (1999), who presented seven standards of high quality qualitative research, which will be addressed in turn. The first standard relates to the intended purpose of the research, which will be outlined within this introduction and the proceeding chapter, which contextualises this project. Subsequently, within the methodology, 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

² Due to the context in which this research was situated, Probation practice will relate to practices within England and Wales forthwith.

response to previous research. The use of focus groups and interviews will also be justified, using the literature to highlight their appropriateness. 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 probationers. 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 the methodology. In response to the fifth standard, the process of participatory data analysis will be elaborated upon and its relevance will appear within the results and discussion chapter. The sixth standard outlined by Elliot 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). The conclusion will address the final standard; providing a contribution to knowledge within the academic community. This will focus upon the impact and contribution of this project to theory and future practice.

Research Questions

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

Themes	Research Questions
<i>Conceptualising the TCR</i>	1) How are TCRs conceptualised within Probation practice, by probationers?
<i>Exploring the Relational Narrative</i>	2) How do probationers and practitioners describe the relational narrative? 3) What elements of good practice can maximise the likelihood of relationship success, from the perspective of the probationer and the practitioner?
<i>Correctional Ruptures</i>	4) How do probationers and practitioners describe ruptures within Probation practice? 5) How might ruptures be successfully repaired within Probation practice, from the perspective of the probationer and practitioner?

Table 1: Themes and Corresponding Research Questions of the Doctorate.

Problems in Probation Practice

The research questions have been constructed in response to numerous problems that have been identified from my professional experience. Whilst a “*positive*” relationship has been highlighted as a “*positive vehicle for change*” within Probation (Copsey, 2011, p.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 practitioner and the way in which they understand and act are dependent upon numerous variables including attitudes (to both “*offender*” and “*offence*”), values (Day and Ward, 2010), and relational schemata³ and attachments (Black, Hardy, Turpin, and Parry, 2005). As practitioners construct their own relational representations and act accordingly, a plurality of practice emerges that

³ Schemata can be defined as “*working models*” that individuals construct from their most important relationships (Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel and Thomson, 1993.)

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 whilst the significance of a CR has been identified, there is a lack of sound knowledge about what makes a “*good*” or “*right*” relationship. This project aims to address these issues by exploring *how* probationers 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 TCRs. McNeill (2004) emphasised the need for a greater theoretical debate around relational construction within corrections. Maruna (2000, p.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 practitioner, there appears to be numerous assumptions made around relationships in practice. Firstly, practitioners recognise the effective elements within their relationships. Secondly, practitioners are aware when a relationship is not working, reflect upon this accurately and act appropriately, when a relationship is challenging. Thirdly, practitioners are aware of the influence they are having on a probationer and believe a TCR is important and necessary. Whilst some practitioners competently build TCRs with probationers, this is not a standard expectation of current Probation 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 project begins this unique exploration.

Probation is currently undergoing a significant challenge due to the proposals made by the coalition government to privatise the majority of Probation work, thus leaving Probation only accountable for those who are deemed “*high*” risk (Ministry of Justice (MofJ), 2013). Under the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda, it is a priority to focus on those things that “*add value*” to rehabilitative work (MofJ, 2013). At this 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 TCR can contribute to, what Gough (2012) described as, the coupling of risk and rehabilitation within contemporary corrections. Through a greater analysis of TCRs, practitioners do not have to limit their knowledge by thinking about “*What Works*,” but can instead creatively construct individualised relational theories with probationers. This awareness may support the practitioner in developing and safeguarding their relationships. Matthews and Hubbard (2007) 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*” (Matthews and Hubbard, 2007, p.109). 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 in view 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 Significance and Contribution of this Research

Drawing upon the significance of this research and its contribution to existing knowledge, three main arguments are proposed. It will; (1) increase the current knowledge specific to TCRs; (2) provide new insights that will inform good practice and; (3) promote the deeper involvement of the probationer 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 TCRs. Lamet, Dirkzwager, Denkers and Van Der Laan (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, Horvath (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. Whilst work has begun in this area within psychotherapy, little work has currently been undertaken within Probation in England and Wales. Safran and Muran (1996) discussed how research into relational ruptures (a temporary tear in the TR) 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 Probation practice, but empower practitioners with the notion that ruptures are “*normal*” and can lead to opportunities for growth.

For the practitioner; this may promote the notion of developing TCRs and for the probationer; 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. Whilst 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.

A comprehensive framework that guides the practitioner through some insights into the development, maintenance and endings of TCRs 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 probationer and practitioner), but throughout correctional systems.

Listening to the “Offender Voice” in Relational Research

As Appleton (2010) highlighted, contemporary notions of punishment have altered the role of “*the offender*” from an individual that needs reforming, to “*the individual as penal subject*” (p.75). I argue the principles associated with this have encouraged the silencing of “*the offender*” on a humanistic level and promoted the utilisation of homogenous categories that create greater distance between “*them and us.*” I argue that the process of “*othering,*” demotes the “*voice*” of the probationer 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 involvement throughout each stage of the research from design to analysis. The probationer was not seen as a subject, but took on the role as consultant, participant and analyst. As Barry (2007) highlighted in her work, “*offenders and ex-offenders have a wealth of knowledge and expertise*” (p.415) and should be viewed as “*expert witnesses.*” Whilst 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 thesis, as well as the notion that, in order to gain a rich insight into TCRs, 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 1970’s, 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 penological knowledge 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 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*". Striving to paint an accurate picture of probationer'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. Probationers 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 insights that have proved invaluable to me. 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 probationers to promote the “*offender voice*”, actively encouraging researchers to reflexively consider accessible ways to approach research in the future, to encourage power equality, when working with those that are marginalised.

The following chapter will situate the research historically and consider my own professional journey relevant to the project.

2.SITUATING THE RESEARCH

To contextualise this research project, this chapter will outline the contribution relational work has made within Probation, considering how the relationship has evolved over time. Additionally, it will provide a personal reflection that aims to situate my own position within the research, to strengthen the rationale that underpins this project.

Relationships have featured throughout Probation practice and have remained central to front-line practice, in spite of socio-economic and political influence. CRs can be traced throughout Probation history and reflecting upon historical developments is deemed essential, before addressing how TCRs can develop in the future. Probation Officers (POs) and practitioners have been bombarded with numerous demands through the politicisation of correctional practice, since the early 1990's and as a response to this, Probation relationships have adapted. This chapter will therefore retrace the CR and argue that relationships have consistently featured within Probation practice, though their visibility and configuration has changed.

Early Relationships in Probation: "Advise, Assist and Befriend"

The primary function of Probation at its establishment in the late 19th 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 POs should "*advise, assist and befriend*" offenders and rejected any responsibilities to punish (Goodman, 2003). Whilst 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 wrong-doer (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 probationer behaviour and motivation through a person-centred approach, associated with Rogerian thinking (Rogers, 1967). It was noted by Dietrich (1979, p.17) that therapeutic advice was at times questionable, simplistic and variable between practitioners, reflecting an “*anything goes*” approach. By the late 1970’s, Davies (1979) referred to the casework relationship as; “*the probation officer’s main instrument*” and yet, Vennerd and Hedderman (1998) later criticised casework to be unstructured, loose and overly didactic. Probation became more “*scientific*” during this time and a “*treatment*” model dominated practice, through more psychological techniques, rather than understanding personal character (Canton, 2011). Whilst 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 over-generalised rejection of casework relationships politically.

“Advise, Assist and Befriend” to “Confront, Challenge and Control”

Probation experienced a crisis in the 1970’s, as it questioned its role in relation to punishment and offender reformation. With the collapse in 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 objectification of offenders and “*officer-centred*” approach, which was associated with correctional treatment during modernity (Bottoms and McWilliams, 1979).

In the 1990’s, 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 recidivism through the notions of helping the probationer 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 amongst “*service providers*” (HO, 1988), an initiative that attempted to relieve practitioners of their traditional roles (Drakeford, 1993).

However, due to the reluctance to use partnership resources, Burnett (1996) argued 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 1990’s that declared that under evidence-based practice, rehabilitative work could be of value. 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). POs were required to adopt new skills within assessment and management, which had several repercussions, including lower job satisfaction, de-skilling (Partridge, 2004) and a decline in “*practice virtues*” (McNeill, 2006). During this time, the Home Office (1998, p.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 21st Century and political shift from care to control considerably altered the role of the PO and how relationships were configured. As a result of this, the emphasis on relationships shifted onto skills relevant to sequencing and prioritizing 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. 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. Whilst these aspects featured within the principles of effective practice, the visibility of relationships seemed to be clouded by the political drive towards risk management.

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 congruent with 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 probationers (Garland, 1997, p.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, inferred 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, p.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, Eadie and Knight (2008), a real 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 to protect the public by managing risk (Fitzgibbon, 2007), as offender need became the target of transformative therapeutic interventions, aimed at behavioural change (O'Malley, 2002). Whilst a crime reduction role of the Service 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 CRs with probationers, were better quality. This indicated that whilst relationships were de-centralised from political discourse, they were still utilised as an instrument to gain a greater understanding of the probationer. With criticisms of casework focused upon a lack of standardisation, the "*What Works*" agenda was criticised for being rigid and monolithic, diverting attention away from alternative legitimate goals associated with supervision (Leach, 2000). Underdown (1998) noted that CRs needed to complement the work of other services, acting as a consistent player within the probationer's pursuit of rehabilitation. Relationships were therefore used to serve multiple functions and aimed to provide case management consistency to address high attrition 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 CR. 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 CRs, 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, Walters, Gingerich and Meltzer (2006, p.38) promoted the concept of the PO 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, Rugge, Scott, Bourgon and Yessine (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, Gutierrez and Ashton (2011) also encouraged the need for a more active and direct interaction, reinstating the supervisee as the primary change agent

in their own right, through the exercise of “agency” (e.g. see Farrall, 2002; Farrall, 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.

Whilst 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 re-configuration over Probation history, the position of the relationship has altered in training, in response to these changes. Up until the 1990's, Eadie (2000) highlighted that Probation training took place alongside social workers and at this time, professional judgement remained a central feature to offender casework.

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.

Whilst 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 (see Gelsthorpe, Raynor and Robinson, 2010) led to political pressure that distanced the practitioner, away from the offender. 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; 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 co-ordinate probationers, through case management. This was later replaced with the Probation Qualification Framework (PQF) in 2010 and whilst 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 visibility of relationships 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, whilst also recommending continuous professional development (CPD) and consistent feedback on practice (Bourgon, Bonta, Rugge and Gutierrez, 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. 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

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 (MofJ, 2013). Robinson (2013) recognised numerous problems associated with the new plans that structurally meant that Probation would be dismantled and practitioners dispersed amongst Community Rehabilitation Companies (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 adverse 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 doctorate will present a number of reasons why Probation should reconfigure relational work once more, to retain welfaristic values and fulfil the functions of contemporary Probation practice in addressing recidivism. To achieve this, I propose that the future of Probation is co-produced and co-imagined *with* probationers 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, might be hoped to increase the visibility of relationships. Whilst the CJS may have been characterised by stable and fixed agencies in the past, Zedner (2006, p.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.

My Professional 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 affect. In order to fully contextualise this project, the following reflexive account outlines my professional journey, the reasons why I chose to research TCRs and my movement from insider to outsider and my arrival at "*the space between*" (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.100).

I have always enjoyed working with others, spending time understanding and supporting people. Upon reflection, this has been nurtured by two loving parents and a Baptist upbringing, which promoted the need to accept individuals, support those less fortunate than myself and represent my faith through actions. 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 environment that held anxiety, especially when I witnessed some prison staff abusing their position by

working against prisoners, instead of with them. This experience prompted an interest in TCRs that was established further by my post-graduate study of CRs with young women offenders at a London prison. During my Masters degree, an opportunity to work in a more therapeutic role in the community (Programme Facilitator), allowed me to utilise my passion for psychology. During my years as a Programme Facilitator, where I delivered cognitive-behavioural programmes, I became increasingly interested in the dynamics of TCRs 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 probationers their frustrations relating to their CRs. Upon reflection, this motivated me to consider the importance of TCRs, as it was something that I believed could be both powerful and transformational. As I began to seek the views of probationers, I came to realise that their “*expert*” opinions complimented 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 probationers I was interviewing. A probationer agreed to assist me in developing a visual technique of plotting probationers’ narratives, using mind maps to explore significant TCRs in greater detail. Shortly after this time, I secured a grant to participate in what became my second exploration into TCRs. I developed the visuals in a slightly different way, based upon probationer feedback and wanted to

consider the possibilities of involving probationers 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* TCRs became a new interest, as I explored the literature around psychotherapy and consulted with probationers informally. To gain further insight, I asked a probationer to discuss the stages of our TCR. 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 re-visiting the literature within psychotherapy, I found from my personal experiences as a practitioner, ruptures were present within CRs. This stimulated a desire to explore how ruptures manifest in Probation 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, forthcoming) 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 (ICJS), teaching Probation practitioners the academic element of their PQF. 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 compliment 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 SGS Award within my local Probation Trust, the Home Office, senior management on the PQF 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 probationers within my work, the more insight I gain into how relationships are conceptualised by those that offend. I learnt about TCRs *through* my relationships. I becoming increasingly convinced that when studying relationships, we need to be more informed; by evidence-based relational research; by those that experience TCRs and; by disciplines which prioritise such relationships within their work. It is within this context that my current research sits. The next chapter aims to review the relational literature to fully contextualise and situate this doctoral project and shed greater light on the research objectives.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

"A company of porcupines 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. But soon they felt one another's quills, which induced them to separate again. And now, when the need for warmth brought them nearer together again, the second evil arose once more. So that they were driven backwards and forwards from one trouble to the other, until they had discovered a mean distance at which they could most tolerably exist."

(Schopenhauer 1851, cited by Mattinson, 1975, p.24)

This chapter will critically explore relevant literature through three emerging themes that relate specifically to the research; (1) conceptualising the TCR; (2) the relational narrative and; (3) relational ruptures and resolution. Whilst some research within the realms of offender rehabilitation has been undertaken with regard to the first theme, alternative disciplines will be explored with respect to the latter two themes, due to a dearth of correctional literature, though a critical discussion will occur relating to Probation applicability. This literature review was carried out systematically following Booth, Papaioannou and Sutton's (2012) recommendations of an explicit and clear synthesise of a given topic. Key terms were used to search the literature (e.g. *"therapeutic relationship"* *"probation relationship"* *"correctional work"*) to account for national and international work specific to relationships. Literature searches were carried out regularly in order to account for new knowledge and in light of new ideas that emerged during the research process.

Understanding the TCR

By reviewing the literature relating to the conceptualisation of TCRs, Ross et al (2008) provided a thorough and critical review, which highlighted that a TCR⁴ 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 TCRs. 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 TCR and its interactions, but recognised the importance of the practitioner, offender and context. This model will be critically evaluated with respect to recent literature, concluding that TCRs are complex, dynamic, conditional and diverse. The literature also highlighted that TCRs are rights-based, a “*place*” for growth and support the processes of desistance.

Looking sideways, the TR has been well documented within psychotherapy (Kokotovic and Tracey, 1990; Greenson, 1965, Freud, 1953). Kokotovic and Tracey (1990) outlined that the TR 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 the TR; an agreement of “*task*,” “*goal*” (that referred to the main outcome of treatment) and a positive attachment between client and practitioner (“*bond*”). Whilst Bordin (1979) noted that the TR is not, in itself curative, he argued that it is the ingredient that enables treatment to be followed faithfully. Skeem, Loudon, Polaschek and Camp argued (2007, p.338) that Bordin’s model (1979) was

⁴ Similar to Hill and Knox (2014), the term “*relationship*” refers to the totality of the interpersonal field, including the term “*alliance*.”

not fully appropriate to forensic settings due to the power differentials that exist, highlighting the increased complexities that “*dual-role relationships*” hold, compared to TRs. As Trotter (1999) acknowledged, it is possible to satisfy therapeutic and social control roles, through the process of role clarification. In addition to this, whilst TCRs may be more complex, this does not necessarily infer that aspects of the TR do not exist within a TCR. Ross et al (2008) used Bordin’s triad (1979) within their revised model of the TCR 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) conceptualisation of the TR is deceptively simple and successfully highlights the multi-dimensional nature of TRs (Safran and Muran, 2003). In relation to these opposing positions, it is argued that whilst Bordin’s (1994) notion of the TR may appear simple, the fluctuating and interdependent features of the TR are recognised and at its time of creation, significantly advanced the theoretical understanding of TRs.

Odiah and Wright (2000) argued that aspects of a TR are not possible within coercive settings, as CRs 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 TR requires the process of *negotiation* between the client and practitioner and yet, within a correctional context this is problematic, as sentencing is imposed upon the offender. 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 practitioners can use their power in different ways, which could prove conducive or detrimental to the TR.

These insights infer that power differentials are inherently present within Probation and opens up 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. Firstly, 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. Secondly, a “*rupture*” is individualistic and through rupture knowledge, Probation practitioners can become more equipped to recognise ruptures and manage them. Whilst TCRs may differ from one probationer to another, Safran and Muran (1996) highlighted that sequences of recurring states can occur and identifiable patterns can emerge. In the same way that each individual has relational schemata, it is argued that patterns can also exist which are characteristic to a specific relationship. As highlighted by my own research (see Lewis, 2014b), CRs can impact negatively on the processes of desistance, through feelings of bitterness and anger that are experienced by probationers during negative CRs, as a response to practitioner behaviour. Similarly, Lieberman, Yalom and Miles (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, acting upon them appropriately. Bonta et al (2008) rightly argued that there is limited knowledge relating to ineffective measures that can “*turn off*” a probationer. Clark (2005) supported such a notion and stated that the “*backing away*” or “*shutting down*” of a probationer can occur and lead to possible disengagement. These propositions can be aligned to the work of Safran, Muran and Eubanks-Carter (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 Probation practice and hence, a study that explores ruptures, will benefit the practitioner and develop the theoretical understanding of relationships within practice.

Unravelling the TCR

Within the revised theoretical model of the TCR, Ross et al (2008, see Fig. 1) 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).

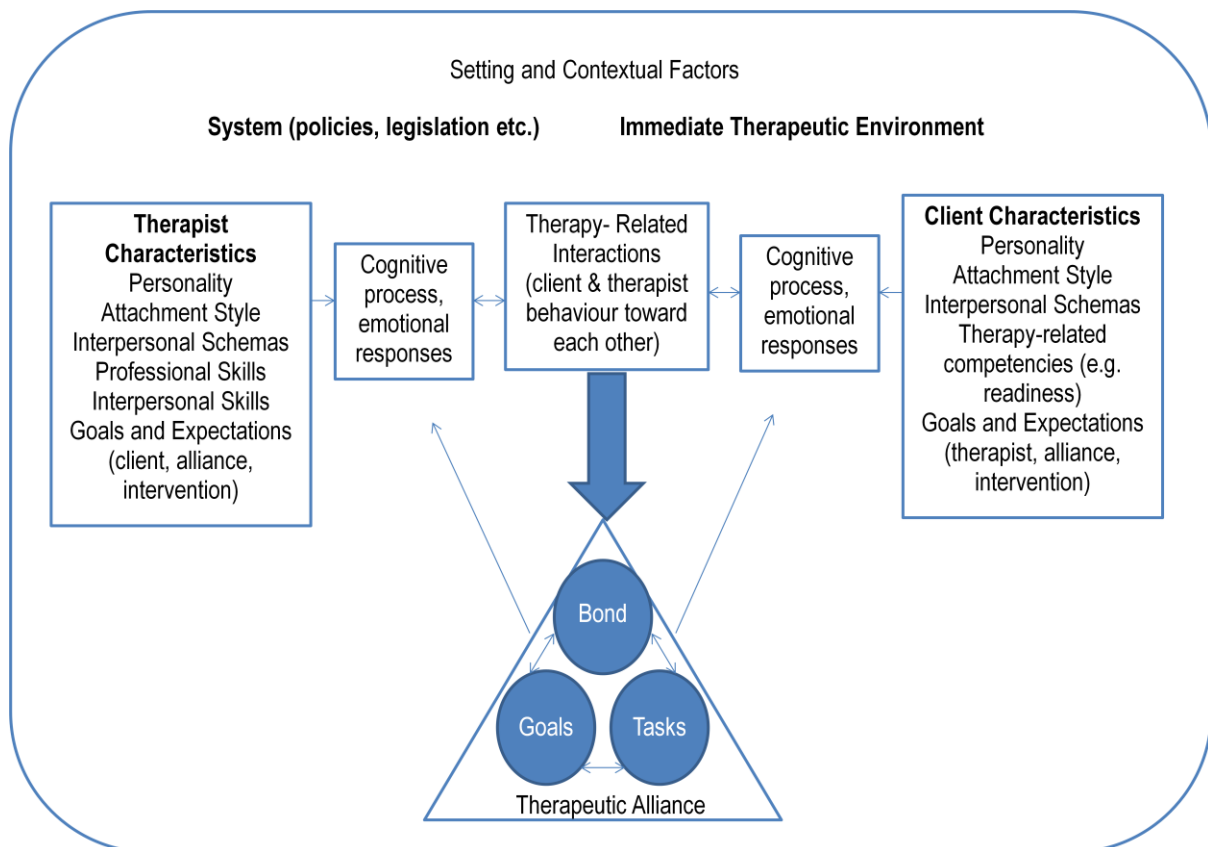


Fig. 1: Taken from Ross et al (2008): The revised theory relating to TCRs.

When conceptualising the TCR, Ross et al (2008) and Lewis (2014b) attend to the practitioner and their influences and this is responsive to contemporary psychodynamical theories, which have further appreciated the role and impact of the practitioner, on the TR. Rogers (1967) discussed the importance of congruence between feelings, beliefs and behaviour, highlighting the interconnectivity of specific variables. Whilst Ross et al (2008) acknowledged the importance of emotions and emotional receptivity within TCRs, they also accepted that little is known about the role 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 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 facet of the practitioner, though it is questioned whether such skills are effective if TCRs are not established to a particular depth or "*good enough*" (Ross et al, 2008). This thesis aims to develop the work of Ross et al (2008), examining how emotions may play a role during the relational narrative and determine instances that could be identified as ruptures.

TCRs and Distance

A particular strength of the review provided by Ross et al (2008) was the acknowledgement of the dynamic nature of TCRs. They referred to the work of Safran and Muran (2006), who stated that TRs are not static, but constantly shift.

Within a Probation context, Mattinson (1975) elaborated on the story of the porcupines from Schopenhauer (1851), considering it from a correctional perspective. 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’s work (1996) as follows:

“All human interpersonal behaviour represents blends of two basic motivations: the need for control (power, dominance) and the need for affiliation (love, friendliness). 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, p.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 and publically “*celebrated*” through the processes of punishment (Maruna, 2001). It is argued that based on this position, the offender is invariably disadvantaged, making relatedness challenging, negotiation constrained, and trust hard to build.

Whilst 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 conceptualised through psychological and social constructs, which can alter the position of the probationer within the CR. 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 Probation is situated, power may influence distance on a broader level. The question arises as to how Probation currently views 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.

TCRs and Context

Stepping back, Ross et al (2008) attended to systemic processes, which were defined as the factors that are “*outside of the control of client and therapist*” (Ross et al, p.409). They recognised that role conflict can exist if “*systems*” (in this case, Probation) are not congruent to the practitioners. To strengthen this proposition, Orsi, LaFortune and Brochu (2010) argued that the development of a TR is

influenced by the legal and institutional contexts surrounding the therapeutic process. It is proposed that the recent drive toward 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 probationers. Foucault's analysis (1977) relating to punishment considered the influence of power with respect to broader systems and how power operates within institutions. 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. 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 doctoral work will begin to illuminate how techniques of control are conceptualised between practitioner and probationer. Further to this, it aims to critically explore the propositions of Garland (1990), who stated that the function of power may be multi-dimensional and can be configured both positively and negatively.

TCRs 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 probationer may impact on the likelihood of re-offending, as found within my recent research (Lewis, 2014b). King (2013) and

McNeill and Robinson (2013) supported the notion that a practitioner may have an enabling role, supporting desistance and the development of pro-social identities. Comparatively, Shattell, Starr and Thomas (2007) argued that TRs can provide a “*dress rehearsal*” (p.275) 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 TR. When applied to corrections, Bonta et al (2008) argued 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 inferred that relationships can be conceptualised in terms of “*place*”; a “*place*” for growth and learning. Orsi et al (2007) concluded from their work, that not only are relationships interrelated with other relationships (that may operate within and between different individuals) but, that such modifications of 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 through linearity) 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, Samstag, Muran and Stevens (2001) acknowledged that different patterns can exist within a TR 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, amounting in a dynamic and entangled outcome that is difficult to measure (Bernecker, Levy and Ellison, 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*” (Mittleton-Kelly, 2003), which are defined and constructed, in reference to social environment.

Whilst the significance of practitioner’s values was outlined within Ross et al’s (2008) model, I argue that hope and belief remain underestimated. This may include how “*the relationship*” can allow probationers to build hope (Flesaker and Larsen, 2012), as well as specific facets of the TR that may facilitate hope, such as genuineness (Horberg, Brunt and Axelsson, 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 TCR and the attribute of persistence, when relationships become challenging (Lewis, 2014b; Lewis, forthcoming). 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 TCRs, between different aspects of the relationship.

Focusing in on TCRs

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, Davis and Williams (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. Considering the TCR as a *right* rather than a privilege has been linked to the notions of a humanistic approach within rights-based rehabilitation. Day, Casey, Ward, Howells and Vess (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 TCRs. 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 CRs, as factors outside of Probation (e.g. political and the media) continues to shame and demonise the criminal openly. 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 contradictions 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 thesis aims to examine whether contradictory practice operates within frontline practice and examines if similar configurations occur at different levels.

TCRs and Diversity

A further theme that emerged within the literature was the notion that relationships are individualised. Challenges of standardised and homogenous 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. With respect to TCRs, it is consistently recognised that the assumption of homogeneity needs to be challenged once more. Put simply, relationships mean different things to different people (Orsi et al, 2010). For example, Amaro, Blake, Schwartz and Flinchbaugh (2001) found that young girls value the emotional exchange that can occur within a TR, to develop self efficacy and self esteem. Zack, Castonguay and Boswell (2007) noted that with adolescent youths, TCRs can be conceptualised by Bordin’s (1979) three components and suggested that young people are more responsive with 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 TCRs 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, Serran, Fernandez, Mulloy, Mann and Thornton (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, TCRs may be unique to the individuals who partake in it, and yet, they are conceptualised through the notion of homogenous groups. It is important 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 TCRs, 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 TRs, as opposed to using established theory and the processes of categorisation. This poses some serious challenges, in view of the context in which TCRs 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), “*modernization involved not just structural change, but a changing relationship between social structures and social agents*” (p. 2). This would infer 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 TCRs, this research aims to unearth the fluid mechanisms that underpin TCRs, to support productive processes within Probation practice and promote a re-configuration of relationships once more.

The Relational Narrative: Exploring the stages of the TCR

Whilst the relational narrative is documented within the fields of psychotherapy and nursing, limited research relating to offender populations question whether such a process can be applied to TCRs. It has been highlighted by Beeber, Anderson and Sills (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 the literature, the stages of TCRs will be critically explored under the broad headings of; pre-conceptions, early stages (including the first meeting), the working stage and the latter stages of resolution/termination. The 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 practitioners can successfully develop positive relational narratives.

(i) *Relational Pre-conceptions*

It would seem that numerous variables impact upon the practitioner and client, prior to the first meeting. Within nursing⁵, Forchuk (1994) and Peplau (1952; 1997) argued that the pre-conceptions of the nurse can influence the latter stages of the working relationship and subsequent development of the TR. Similarly, within psychotherapy, Safran and Muran (2003) referred to the pre-conceptions that can be determined by prior expectations and previous attachments, which colour future TRs. Within a correctional context, Lewis (2014b) indicated that probationers' past CRs influence the way they interact in subsequent CRs with their PO. This can be linked to forms of attachment and Bowlby's work (1988), which suggested that early relationships with significant care-givers 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 a probationer within CRs that will increase the likelihood of positive change, through the development of a healthy bond. Ryals (2011) acknowledged that relational pre-conceptions 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.

Whilst this stage within the relational journey is documented by Ryals (2011), it was not elaborated upon significantly. Currently there is little known research that

⁵ From reviewing the literature, the stages of TRs featured heavily within the disciplines of nursing and psychotherapy. These will be briefly examined with the focus of discussing the extent to which such relationships can be applied to Probation practice.

considers how pre-conceptions of practitioners can be effectively managed within Probation practice. Within psychotherapy, Safran (1990) argued that relationship schemata can determine how clients 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 whilst 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 is proposed that my research will shed some light on these areas.

(ii) *Early Stages of the TCR*

Eaton, Abeles and Gutfreund (1988) stated that the practitioner's contributions at the initial stages of a TR are crucial to the success of that relationship and 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 client. This is considered to be a particularly significant event (Morgan, Luborsky, Crits-Cristoph, Curtis and Solomon, 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, Costantino and Holtforth (2006) proposed that during the first three meetings, a TR is most likely to develop. Gelso and Carter (1985) acknowledged that if a TR 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 deemed "*good enough*" (Ross et

al, 2008), in order for the probationer to join the practitioner in the “*therapeutic journey*” (Horvath and Luborsky, 1993, p.561). This included an agreement of goals with corresponding tasks and a development of faith on the success of such tasks. This suggests that particular judgements have been configured 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 the “*clients*”. During these early stages, Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993) acknowledged the importance that the client accepts the practitioner, as this influences the degree to which agreement is established, specific to the goal of treatment.

Horvath’s work (2005) detailed how the quality of agreement is forged through a caring and trusting approach, which can lead to a more collaborative position. Previous 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 pre-conceptions may influence relational receptivity (Luborsky, McLellen, Woody, O’Brien and Auerbach, 1985). With respect to CRs, little work considers the role of pre-conceptions within correctional work. 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. He inferred that this process of “*making up*” is bi-directional and

stated; *“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 pre-conceptions are constructed by both the probationer and practitioner through the use of labels. 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 CRs in respect to how the processes of identity formation (and transformation) are altered and adapted through social interactions and processes of labelling. This doctorate aims to examine if 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 by Forchuk (1994) and Sundeen, Stuart, Rankin and Cohen (1989) as important, in order to seek understanding of the client and reduce the anxiety that they may experience during the early stages. Within a correctional context, Ryals (2011) highlighted that a TCR 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 ease tension. Within correctional work, Bonta et al (2008) observed that hostile and unfriendly behaviour at the early stages of supervision can “*turn off*” the probationer. It would appear that this stage is crucial for the success of a TR within nursing and psychotherapy and lessons can be learnt 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. 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 project will explore whether the initial meetings within a correctional setting are described in similar ways and what guidance practitioners and probationers might recommend at this stage, to increase the likelihood of relational development.

(iii) Working/Latter Stages of the TCR

It is hoped that as the early stages of the relationship ends, 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. 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, Muran and Samstag (1992) claimed that it is likely that ruptures will occur at this stage and the successful repair of them 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. Firstly, 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 anti-social behaviour was regarded by probationers as important, as it highlighted the opportunity to address old ways of thinking and replace them with more effective alternatives (Lewis, 2014b). This type of challenge, defined as "*pro-social push*," was characteristic to the mature stages of the TCR. It is therefore argued that similar to the work of psychotherapy, the placement of challenges may impact upon how a probationer may listen, react and adapt to the challenges that are proposed by the practitioner. Probationers 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, 2014b). When negative CRs were discussed within my work, in the absence of a TCR, probationers 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 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 TR. This

doctorate aims to illuminate if such a reflective approach is justified and appropriate within Probation practice.

(iv) *Resolution/Terminating the TCR*

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 TR 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, Everson, Adrians, Hess, Hill and Crook-Lyon (2011) and previously, Marx and Gelso (1987), 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 Probation work presents numerous challenges. Firstly, 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 probationer in a difficult position, particularly if it is assessed (by either party) that ending the TCR 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 sadness may all be associated with this period and more so, shortly after termination. Similarly, within my research probationers discussed how they experienced feelings of loss and sadness, one stating that they felt “*empty*” and that something was “*missing*” from their life (Lewis, 2014b). How relationships end is therefore perceived to be of great importance within Probation work, as such emotive responses, if unaddressed, may have negative consequences for the probationer. 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 Probation 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.

Relationships and Ruptures: Safeguarding the TCR

It is inferred within psychotherapy that a positive outcome is not simply relative to positive 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 TR. A “*rupture*” can be conceptualised as the deterioration in the quality of a TR, which presents itself as an opportunity for learning (Safran and Muran, 1996). This relies upon the establishment of a TR, 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 TR. Therefore, ruptures can either create a barrier at the initial stages of a relationship or create a “*blip*” that is an opportunity for growth, which facilitates the client in addressing maladaptive interpersonal schemata (Safran and Muran, 1996). Rupture work developed the theoretical understanding of TRs, as it highlighted that positive outcomes were not only influenced by the development of a TR, but on the resolution of ruptures. Whilst 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 psycho-therapeutic ruptures may differ from those in correctional settings, due to the additional complexities of CRs.

The prevalence and nature of ruptures has been explored in order to gain a greater understanding of relational processes. For example, Nagy, Safran, Muran and Winston (1998) found that ruptures are common within any TR and found from their observations of therapy sessions, that 25-35% of the sessions included ruptures in some form. Muran, Safran, Gorman, Samstag, Eubanks-Carter and Winston (2009) later reported that rupture prevalence can be as high as 56%, from observing the first six sessions of therapy. Whilst 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 a variety of ways an individual can respond and form a TR. This may illustrate the very reason why relationships (and their meaning), may be considered unique to the individual and why disengagement occurs. Whilst the discourse may vary between the correctional and psychotherapeutic world, I argue that the events that would constitute a rupture are similar. This thesis aims to establish how correctional ruptures differ from psychotherapeutic ruptures so that relational knowledge can be applied to practice appropriately.

Rupture Management

Once conceptualised, 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. Firstly, Safran and Muran (2003) highlighted the importance of *preparing* for TRs 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 is the catalyst for the ability to emphasize with others, who have painful stories of their own*” (Williams, 2006, p.28). In this respect, being mindful of the practitioner’s position and relational schemata 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 level⁶ and Cook and Doyle (2002) recognised that expectations around TRs may need addressing by practitioners. With respect to Probation, the context in which relationships are situated can cause some tension, particularly with the relentless shaming of services by the media, when “*mistakes*” occur. This research will explore how ruptures may be sensitively managed within a correctional setting, in light of the power dynamics that exist.

⁶ Day and Ward (2010) define this as aspects of offending practitioners struggle with on a broader level.

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 TR. Rice and Greenburg (1984) inferred 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, p.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*” to encourage a deep exploration into ways to relate, bringing previously unconscious mechanisms into consciousness. With respect to Probation 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 in contradiction to 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 (MofJ, 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, p. 227).

Safran (1990) highlighted that hostile behaviour from a practitioner may lead to a validation of the client’s unhealthy relational schemata 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). Whilst traditional Probation values embraced 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 expressed by Wacquant (2009);

“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” (p.2-3).

This leaves Probation in an uncertain position, as it finds itself torn between traditional Probation 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; provide an opportunity for growth; promote improvements in the relationship (Hill, Nutt-Williams, Heaton, Thompson and Rhodes, 1996); adapt schemata and; initiate new relational experiences (Safran, 1993).

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 TCRs on a broader level. TCRs are important as a “*place*” for learning, which transmits from TCRs into those very relationships that can encourage the desistance process (Farrall, 2002).

In conclusion, the conceptualisation of the TCR is dynamic, complex and individualised. The mechanisms that underlie such a process have been largely ignored within the literature and an investigation into the relational narrative within a Probation 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 TCRs. The identification and management of ruptures has advanced psycho-therapeutic theory considerably to provide a more considered view of TRs. In view of this, the value of this project is evident and a more conscientious consideration of TCRs is embraced, through participatory means.

4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to provide a rationale of my methodological approach and outline the techniques that were utilised within this project. It will firstly describe the epistemological issues and then discuss my positionality within the research. The chapter will outline the rationale of utilising 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 discussed 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 dedicate some time to the development of the visual tools that were utilised, drawing upon two studies that occurred prior to this project from June 2011 through to October 2012⁷.

Adopting a Qualitative Approach

This project took a solely qualitative approach, in response to Higgins (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. Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Goodley, Lawthom, Clough and Moore (2004) recognised 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) criticised post-positivism, highlighting the power imbalance between the expert researcher and the relatively powerless participant. By embracing a participatory position, this criticism

⁷ To add further clarity to this process, a timeline of events can be found in Appendix A.

is addressed through the co-construction and integration of the “*offender voice*” within this research. A participatory perspective assumes that by listening to the experiences of phenomena, knowledge transpires through human interaction and interpretation (McWilliam, Kothari, Ward-Griffin, Forbes and Leipert, 2009).

Throughout this research endeavour, I have found my commitment to enhancing the “*offender voice*” has grown stronger and I feel passionate about offender inclusion, societal reintegration and relationships. I adopted this standpoint because I value the offender as an individual and believe their experiences can illuminate relational research.

My Positionality within the Research

Whilst my positionality to the research has been previously acknowledged, further elaboration is appropriate as my “*place*” within this project was unique and important. Kerstetter’s (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 from the “*insider*”. 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 themselves 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 phenomena 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 for the purpose of this project. 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.

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, Krantz and Ramirez (1986) discussed how Action Research aims to practically address concerns and offer solutions within practice. 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, which are summarised below in Table 2.

Principle of Action Research	Principle Description
Reflexive Critique	Reflecting and evaluating the processes within the research
Dialectical Critique	Pursuing the notion that social reality is validated through language
Collaborative Resource	Participants act as co-researchers
Risk	The potential threat of creative alternatives to practice, which may instill fear
Plural Structure	Embracing a multiplicity of perspectives and corresponding actions/interpretations
Theory, Practice and Transformation	The continuous development of theory and practice

Table 2: A summary of Winter's (1996) core principles of Action Research

To apply these principles to this research project, a reflexive critique was utilised, drawing upon the perspectives of practitioners and probationers. 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 the process, probationers were consulted and their views were integrated within the project. Whilst some may consider this process as “*risky*,” this ultimately enriched the research process, generated excitement and led to greater insights. A structural pluralism was adopted to consolidate each research phase and benefit from the multiplicity of 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. Firstly, a "*problem*" was identified and research questions were developed. Whilst my discussions with probationers 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 covered other disciplines, in order to gain some insight into under-developed 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 conceptualisation of TCRs in previous cycles, it led me to focus upon the micro processes that underpin TCR's. Reason and Bradbury's (2008) fourth stage of Action Research involves the gathering and analysis of data, which will feature in the following chapter. 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 relates 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 I could carry out relational research, including observations, interviewing and narrative inquiry. Whilst observational work highlighted to me the “*issues*” associated with TCRs and contributed to the focus and emergence of the direction of this thesis, 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, 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 limitation.

Interviewing is a popular research technique within qualitative research and can be approached in many ways, depending upon the researchers’ epistemological 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 whilst 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 its 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. Guys and Montague (2008) stated 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; 2004ab) 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 that 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 congruent to my own values, skills and approach. 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 Reflective 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 evaluative discussions with probationers and practitioners materialised, which defined 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, p.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 with mind maps being adopted, following Reason's (2010) research that highlighted their accessibility and responsiveness to contribute to a visual experience (see Lewis, 2014b; Lewis, forthcoming). 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 probationers, which could achieve these objectives. I worked with both practitioners and probationers to design the visuals and used their feedback to refine them (see Figure 2 and 3). The reason for taking this approach was to encourage probationer engagement in the research, gaining insights into their relationships, as well as discussing these experiences with me.

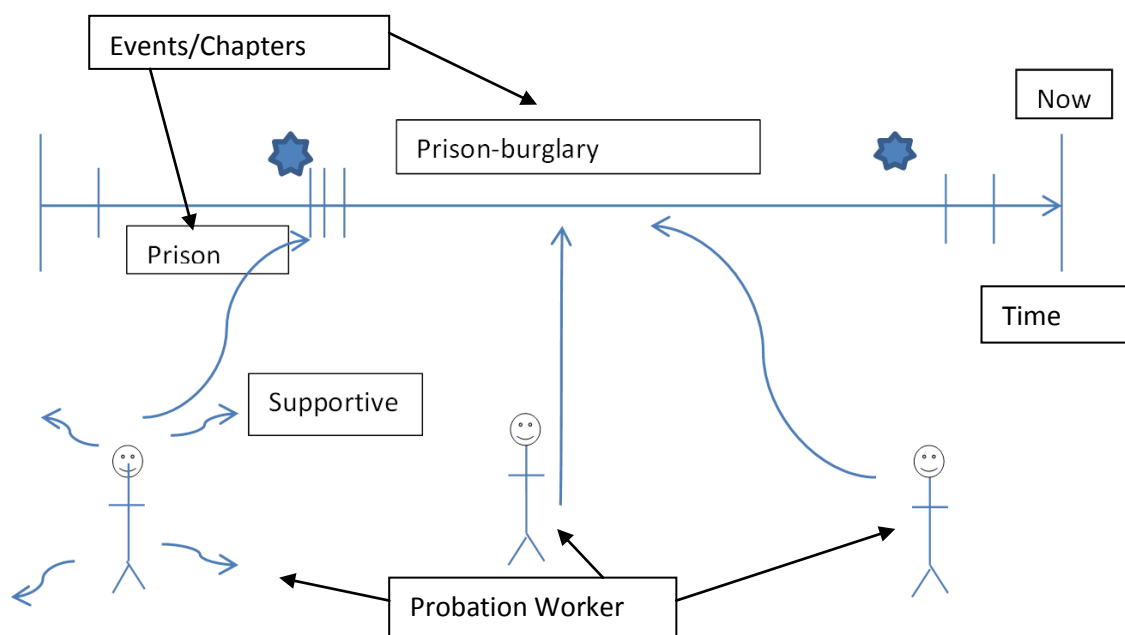


Fig. 2: A basic template of the visual aid used within the first pilot study.

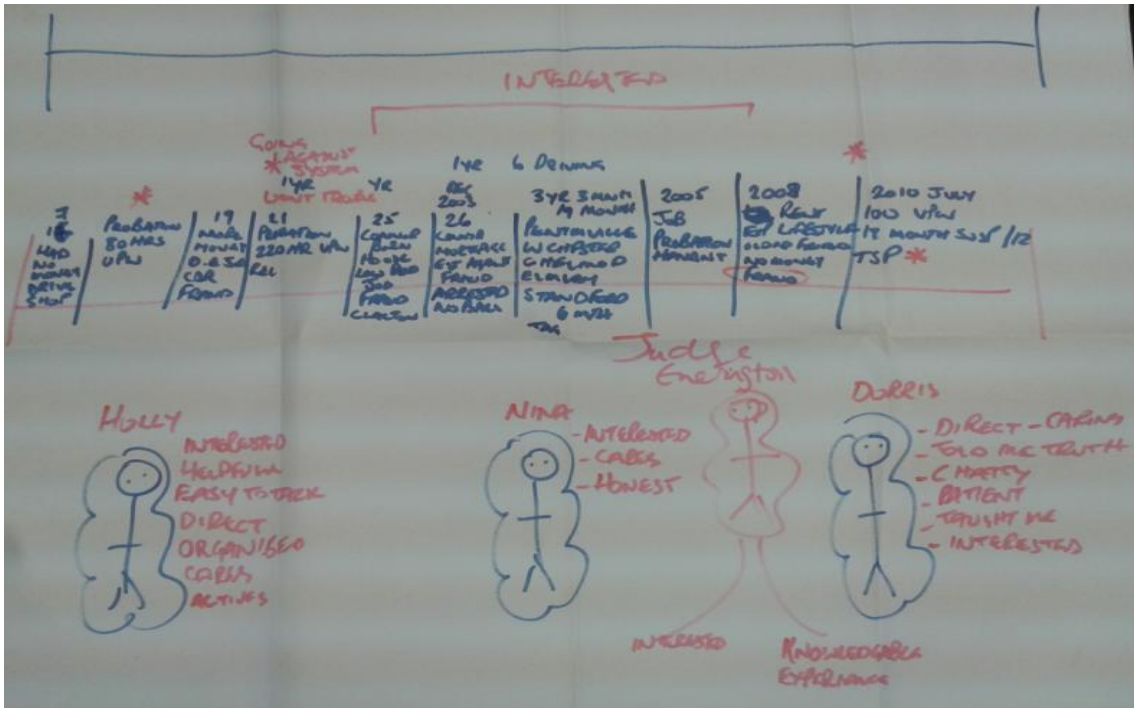


Fig. 3: A photographic copy of a completed visual, drawn by a probationer.

Upon reflection, I recognised both drawbacks and benefits to this approach. Firstly, it was felt that engagement increased as participants constructed their own narrative prior to the discussions around significant TCRs. The interview was very dynamic and the narrative provided a context in which probationers could discuss their relationships. In contrast, this meant that probationers 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.

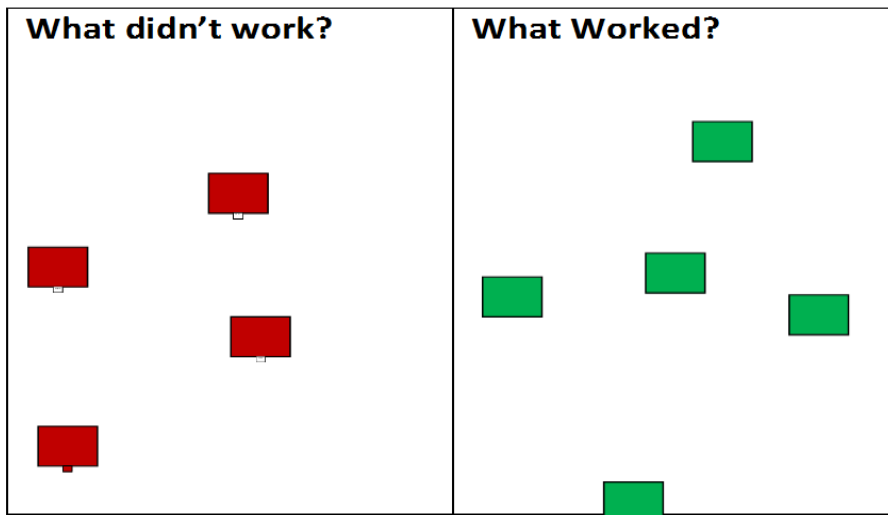
Through further discussions with probationers around the design, new talks were initiated when I secured the Sir Graham Smith (SGS) Award grant, to explore “positive” and “negative” relationships and their impact on probationers. The narrative content was removed for this project to focus more heavily 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. Figure 4

outlines the basic structure of the visual that was developed by two practitioners, two probationers and myself.

Working Relationships

Negative

Positive



The Impact

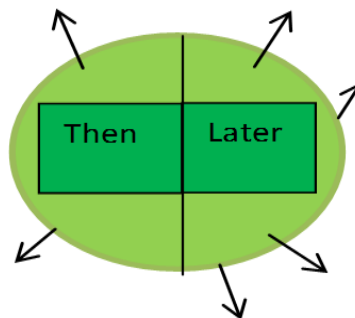
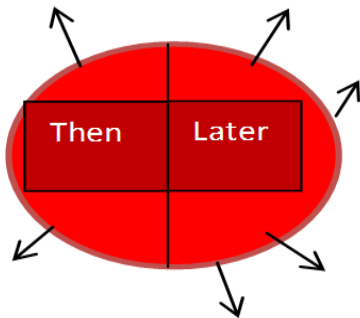


Fig. 4: A visual template for second pilot study.



Fig. 5: A photo of the data analysis session.

From feedback, I designed a visual on two large flip charts, dedicated to “*positive*” and “*negative*” CRs 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 probationers were considered as equals regarding their views and how they constructed and attached meaning to the data as a whole. I collated 221 post-it notes during the seven interviews and loosely grouped the statements by theme, arranging them in rows on flipcharts with each Post-it note representing one statement (see Fig. 5). Two group analysis discussions were then organised for practitioners and probationers separately and the format of these sessions were identical in structure. All of the statements were presented on the walls of a group room and each group were 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 probationers made sense of the themes. The insights I gained from the probationers were significant and it challenged my own analytical approach. It also highlighted the capabilities of probationers to analyse the data, including their significant role in 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 probationer 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 probationers the “*voice*” I was promoting.

When considering the problems associated with this methodology, the loss of control at times was an uncomfortable reality for me. Probationers initially contradicted my own analysis on some of the data and 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 anticipated. Whilst my experiences of TCRs 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 probationers 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 lead to some in-depth discussions and views from all parties that were accepted respectfully, challenged rigorously and consequentially

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 meaningful data.

During the second pilot study, a number of “*problems*” were identified through discussions with probationers, which determined a new direction. It became evident that there was a need to distance myself from the probationers 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 the SGS Award research, I asked a probationer 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 TCRs, which were new to me. 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 probationer 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 TCRs.

In response to discussions with probationers, re-occurring 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 for 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 probationers. 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 probationer discussions and the literature. I felt it would be interesting to contrast two differing roles within the context of Probation, to identify if 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 CRs (and TCRs) 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 congruent to the participatory approach of the project.

Ethical Considerations

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. Erikson (1986) highlighted the importance of transparency, when discussing the purpose of the research. In order to do this, I constructed an informed consent form and information sheet (see Appendix B and C) 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 probationer or others at risk of harm. Keats (2000) recognised the importance of ensuring that the recording (and visuals in my case) of the interviews were kept securely, so that confidentiality was maintained at all times. This also respects the issue of anonymity, as Robson (2002) advised that all data is locked away or, if electronic, secured by a password. This advice encouraged me to store my data appropriately and ensure that my visuals and recordings were secure in order to uphold good practice.

When completing my ethics submission prior to the research, I did not envisage any problems regarding harm to interviewees, though during the pre-test of the

interviews, it was highlighted by a probationer that recalling 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).

To uphold participant respect, should they choose to participate in the research, an informed consent form and information sheet was given to each participant to sign prior to the interview. I reiterated the core ethical issues verbally prior to the interview, in order to ensure that the participants understood the form and confirm their informed consent. At this point, I reminded the participants that the interview would be audio-taped and discussed with them how this data would be stored and used for publications and my doctoral studies. I emphasised the participant's ability to withdraw from the research up until the point of analysis (or up until the start of the

focus group for practitioners) and the voluntary nature of the research. The information form included; a brief overview of the research and its aims; my role within the research; the reasons why I was investigating this topic; the costs and benefits of participating in the research and; how my findings would be used in the future. For the focus group, I discussed ground rules of respect and confidentiality (with its limitations) and asked the group to agree to participate verbally.

Prior to the interviews, probationers were reassured that their participation and information would not be discussed with anyone in Probation, unless it was necessary to do so, due to issues of risk. I informed probationers that I would not inform their Offender Managers that they had agreed to the research or discuss their participation with anyone. Whilst the practitioner sample generated a list of possible participants, they were not informed if their cases agreed to participate. For all participants, I allocated a reference number that could be linked to corresponding consent forms and stored these electronically.

I felt the most significant ethical consideration involved my role within the project. To minimise role conflict where possible, my role was made explicit prior to testing, the university logo was used on all correspondence and I ensured that I was not previously known to the probationers 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. To strive towards a high quality piece of work with robust methodological techniques, I aimed to use collaboration to its fullest, using ex-probationers, probationers and practitioners to provide feedback on my design and results at each stage of the research.

The Research Process

Once access was confirmed and approved by the National Offender Management Service and the Ethical Committee at the University of Portsmouth (see Appendix D), all Programme Facilitators and Offender Managers at my local Probation office were invited to attend the research via email.

For the focus groups, seventeen practitioners were recruited in total (seven Programme practitioners (six females, one male) and ten Offender Managers (five females, five males; See Table. 3 for additional details).

Practitioner	Role	Experience working in Probation	Gender
1	Programme Facilitator	14 years	Female
2	Programme Facilitator	14 ½ years	Male
3	Programme Facilitator	14 years	Female
4	Programme Facilitator	12 years	Female
5	Programme Facilitator	6 ½ years	Female
6	Programme Facilitator	6 years	Female
7	Programme Facilitator	7 years	Female
8	Offender Manager	3 years	Male
9	Offender Manager	5 ½ years	Female
10	Offender Manager	5 years	Male
11	Offender Manager	4 ½ years	Female
12	Offender Manager	6 years	Male
13	Offender Manager	8 years	Male
14	Offender Manager	12 ½ years	Male
15	Offender Manager	8 years	Female
16	Offender Manager	6 years	Female
17	Offender Manager	14 ½ years	Female

Table. 3: Practitioner information for those that participated in 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 probationer sample, I recruited eighteen 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 probationers were also from a broad range of backgrounds and had varying degrees of Probation experience (See Table. 4). 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 from 5 months to 24 years. Whilst 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 CRs/TCRs without making generalisations or classifications relating to specific offence-types, in order to promote the heterogeneity of the sample. Further to this, probationers were not identified within the results sections as it was believed to create assumptive links between offence

and diversity issues that were retrieved during the interview. As a full offence and diversity profile was not collated (as this knowledge was formulated on probationer information), I did not believe such links would be substantive or credible.

Probationer	Experience with Probation	Offences	Gender	Ethnicity
1	12 years	Violence, Domestic Abuse, Drugs	Male	White British
2	11 years	Violence, Sexual Offence	Male	White British
3	6 months	Violence, Theft	Male	White British
4	10 years	PPO, Drugs	Male	White British
5	5 months	Theft, Drugs	Male	White British
6	9 years	Drugs, Burglary	Male	African American
7	17 years	Drugs, Theft	Male	White British
8	20 years	PPO, Drugs, Theft	Male	White British
9	11 months	Theft, Drugs, Violence	Female	White British
10	15 years	Violence, Drugs	Male	White British
11	6 months	Deception	Male	White British
12	13 years	Drugs, Violence	Male	White British
13	7 months	Violence	Male	White British
14	24 years	Theft, Deception	Male	White British
15	14 years	Drugs, Violence	Male	White British
16	8 months	Theft	Male	White British
17	10 months	Domestic Violence	Male	White British
18	24 years	Drugs, Violence	Male	White British

Table 4. Probationer information of those interviewed

This differed from the two proceeding projects, which required a probationer to have had ten years “*experience*” of the service. This alteration was made in light of a discussion I had with a probationer that focused on how the nature of relationships may change over time, as well as between different practitioners. For example, a relationship schema may be more entrenched for longer serving probationers and I wanted to pursue the way in which probationers construct their understanding of the CR, 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 groups, a discussion took place to define the notion of a TCR amongst the group. Practitioners were asked to consider how they may construct different stages of a TCR. Once this was agreed, these were written on blue Post-it notes and placed on the visual (see Fig. 6). Purple Post-it notes were then used to consider the factors that promote TCRs 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 Fig. 7). This allowed me to expand upon the understanding of the different stages and see how they may apply to real life scenarios.

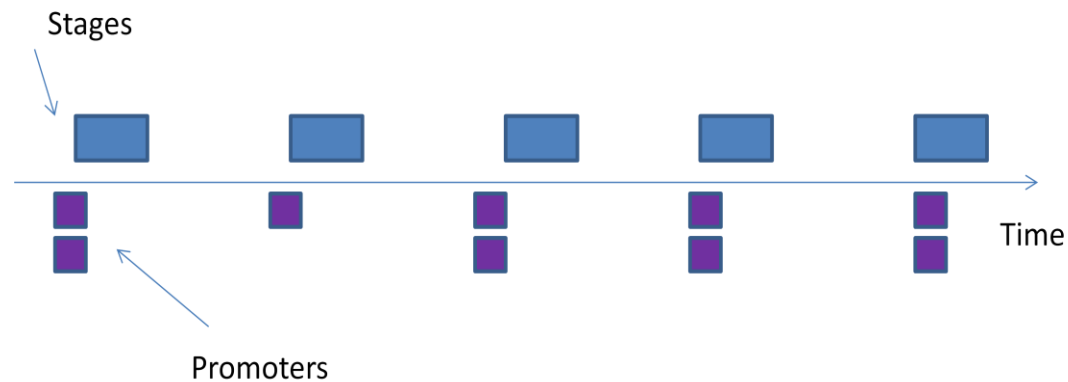


Figure 6: The visual template designed for stage one of the practitioner focus group

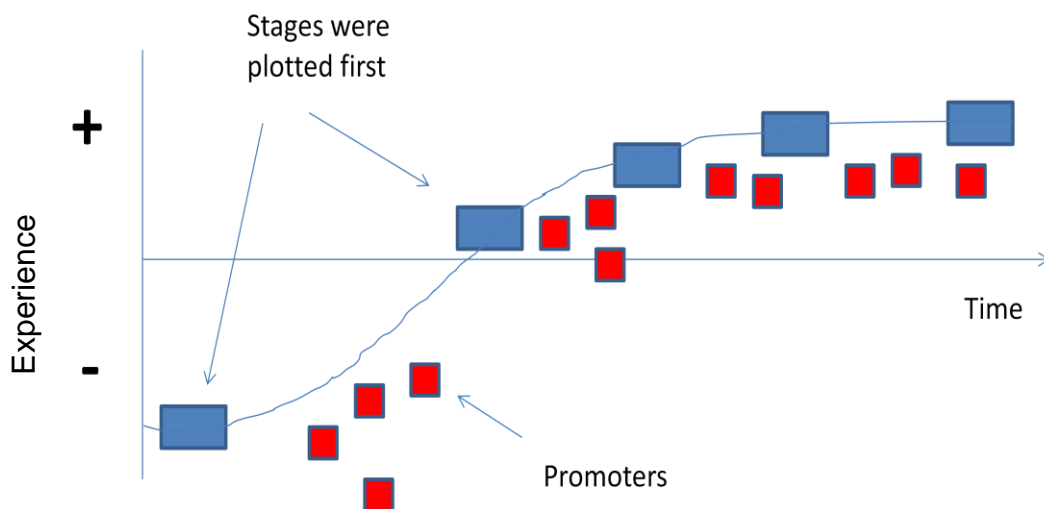


Figure 7: The template design of the visual used within the practitioner focus groups and probationer interviews.

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 be shaken or 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 Fig. 8).

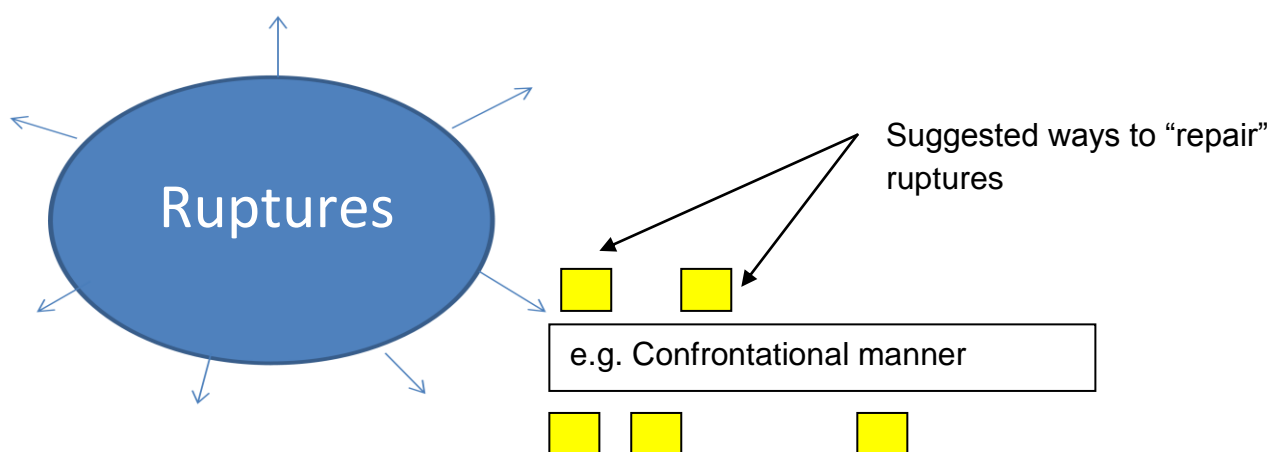


Fig. 8: The visual template designed for stage two of the focus group.

I conducted the focus groups with both Offender Managers and Programme Facilitators separately and at the end of the last focus group, asked the practitioners to refer probationers that may be suitable to the research. Practitioners were asked to discuss the research with their probationers informally for an expression of interest and depending upon the response, I invited them to “opt in” to the research. If interest was elicited, I discussed informed consent and organised an individual interview. It was an anxiety that practitioners would only refer probationers that they felt they had a “good” relationship with, though it became quickly evident that this

was not the case. Practitioners willingly recognised relationships that were difficult, as a way for the probationer 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 probationers 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 probationers who were more willing or engaged and this may have altered the findings and produced a less reflective sample. Whilst 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. Whilst 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 probationers to describe their understanding of the CR. 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 Fig. 7). The stages of the relationship elicited by both focus

groups were verified by two probationers that had experiences in TCRs, during a pre-test phase.

Probationers were encouraged to discuss aspects of their relational narrative and the visual was used to explore different points of the relationship. Additionally, probationers were asked how aspects of practice promoted a TCR⁸ at each stage (indicated in Fig. 7 by red 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.

In conclusion, this chapter has outlined my epistemological standpoint and positionality, the reasons for adopting a participatory approach through an Action Research paradigm and a discussion of the methods used within this project. 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.

⁸ Through discussion. TCRs were defined within the interviews and it was determined whether probationers had experienced TCRs during their time on Probation.

The data that was retrieved for both the focus groups and interview was analysed thematically and transcribed fully. During this process, codes⁹ were generated, the main themes¹⁰ were identified and unresolved thematic questions were formulated, forming the structure for the analysis discussions. Five probationer and three 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. The next chapter will concentrate on the main findings of the research that corresponds to the research questions of this thesis. These will be discussed in light of the literature to consider the extent of their contributions.

⁹ A code constitutes as an element of interest regarding a phenomenon (Boyatzis, 1998.)

¹⁰ As identified by Braun and Clark (2006), a theme “*captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning.*” (p.10)

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: UNDERSTANDING THE TCR

This chapter is organised into three thematic sections that are aligned to the research questions; the conceptualisation of the TCR; the relational narrative and; correctional ruptures.

Lambert and Simon (2008) acknowledged that TRs can be constructed in numerous ways, with a focus upon specific aspects (e.g. practitioner or client traits/contextual factors). In view of the findings, I constructed the Dynamic Model of TCRs as a method of conceptualising TCRs within Probation. This will be developed incrementally and will focus upon conceptualising the TCR, through an exploration of its mechanisms. Diagrammatic figures will be integrated within this to aid understanding, with the objective of presenting a robust model that has a clear rationale.

1. *The “Players”*

As identified by Ross et al (2008), the “*players*” that participate in a TCR hold diverse and individualised personalities, attachments, schemata and skills. This was observed within the probationer findings, as they constructed their own ideas of the Probation practitioner in different ways. Some probationers used their current relational experiences as a point of reference, whilst others discussed past relationships, which seemed significant. Stories were also used as a way to conceptualise their own understanding of the TCR, reflecting upon those elements of the relationship that were of particular importance. Throughout the probationer interviews, it was felt that each probationer had experienced a TCR at one point in their life, though the frequency and depth varied considerably. All probationers

opened their discussions, using a blueprint of TCRs, inferring the adoption of relational schemata. Probationers made quite global judgements relating to practitioners, with one stating; *“Some [are] good, some are bad, but at present, the PO 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 probationer’s schemata seemed to be used as a point of reference, which assisted them to conceptualise relationships with their current practitioner.

The data suggested that there were broader schemata, 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 probationer stated;

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

Researcher: “What are the similarities between a Probation officer and a schoolteacher?”

Probationer: “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 probationer 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?”

Whilst these broader schemata were largely based on previous experience, this supports the notions of Ross et al (2008) that interpersonal schemata are at play within TCRs, though these findings provide some insight into how these schemas are developed through the representation of broader schemata. The probationers also discussed how their own schemata had evolved over time, particularly those that were deemed as “*experienced*¹¹” probationers. One probationer stated;

“I was judging POs 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.”

This affirmed that relational “*players*” were not only individual, but also suggested that relational schemata adapt over time. From the interviews, it suggested that these “*players*” move during the course of the CR, as they attempt to relate with one another or move apart, in the attempt to create individual autonomy. From the probationer’s perspective, the notion arose that practitioners may not be receptive to a TCR and consequently, this may result in a distancing of the probationer, to the point of withdrawal. To illustrate, one probationer 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.”

¹¹ “*experienced*” referred to probationers that had been in contact with Probation for over ten years.

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 inferred that whilst probationers may not be receptive to the TCR, this lack of receptivity (and distancing) may also be experienced by practitioners, as reinforced in theme two. The two “*players*” and their movement is initially illustrated below (see Fig. 9) and will provide the foundations of the Dynamic Model of the TCR, though further attention will be paid to this movement, in section two of the results.

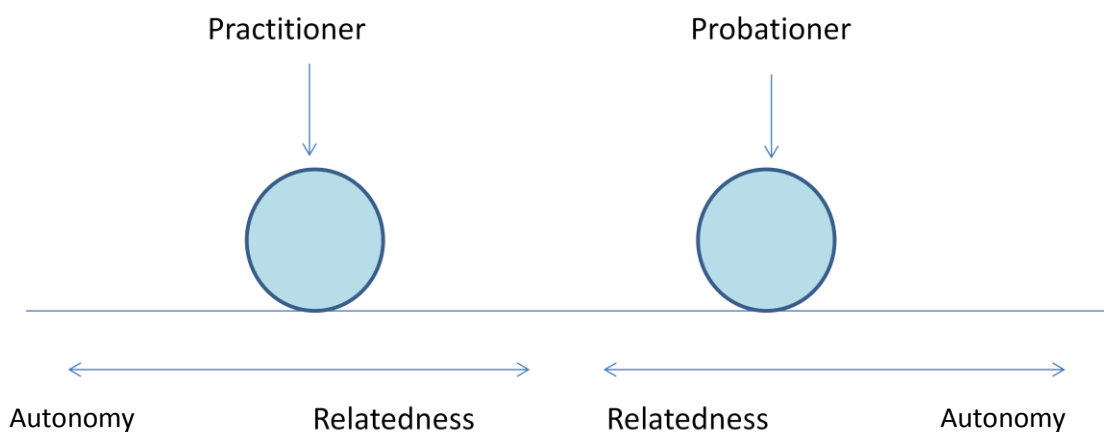


Fig. 9: The Dynamic Model of TCRs: “The Players”

2. Bordin’s Triad: Applicable to the TCR?

A prevalent theme within the data was associated with Bordin’s triad (1979) of “*bond*”, “*task*” and “*goal*.” Firstly, it appeared that the depth of “*bond*” varied both between different individuals and over time, with respect to degrees of relatedness. Some probationers discussed their ideas of the relationship, in relatively superficial terms. One probationer with a very negative view of Probation stated plainly; “*I have to come here, otherwise I would get in trouble.*” Other probationers discussed

deeper relationships, whereupon probationers described relationships as more professional and collaborative. For example, one probationer 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 probationer. For example, one probationer 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 probationer 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.”

Some probationers deepened their ideas around the relationship even further and started to discuss it, in connection with “*task*”. For example, one probationer 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 a probationer; “*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 TCRs 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 probationer stated; “*you’ve got to be on the same page*”, another outlined; “*you’ve got a good relationship with your PO...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 TCR, 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 probationer said: “*She is fighting for me in my corner,*” another 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 probationer, 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 “*bond*” grows and degrades, depending upon the relational experience. This was very evident during the interviews, as probationers spoke with strong emotion and honesty, relating to the impact and value of such experiences.

Bordin’s (1979) final triad of the TR of “*task*” was referred to during the probationer interviews. One probationer highlighted the need for trust and co-operation with respect to “*task*,” he stated;

“It’s got to go both ways. In order for the PO 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 inferred 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 TCR’s may be dependent upon certain conditions, in order to thrive. Due to this entanglement and fluidity, it is suggested that TCRs should be developed through principles that promote individual theory building, as opposed to formulaic or standardised approaches. The findings inferred that for a TCR to become possible, both “*players*” need to willingly “*enter*” into the TCR.

As illustrated below in Figure 10, through relatedness, both “*players*” move towards one another, bond with one another and enter into the TCR. 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 TCR is extended to meet the criteria of “*task*” and “*goal*” collaboratively. Whilst it is agreed that Bordin’s therapeutic triad (1979) features within TCRs, it is proposed, similarly to Ross et al (2008) that it is too simplistic as the dynamic nature of TCRs 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 probationer discussed how her needs could not be fully achieved, due to an absence of “*bond*”;

“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.”

Others described the importance of practitioner empathy through *understanding* their “*needs*.” One 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 a probationer referred to “*task*” through the accurate assessment of “*need*”, stating; “*the good ones put stuff in place, trying to keep me as drug and crime free as possible.*” Another probationer 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.*”

Whilst movement seemed to occur within the TCR, 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 probationer, such tasks and goals were of little or no value. To illustrate, the two examples below are from different probationers;

“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.”

“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.”

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 TCR (see. Fig.10).

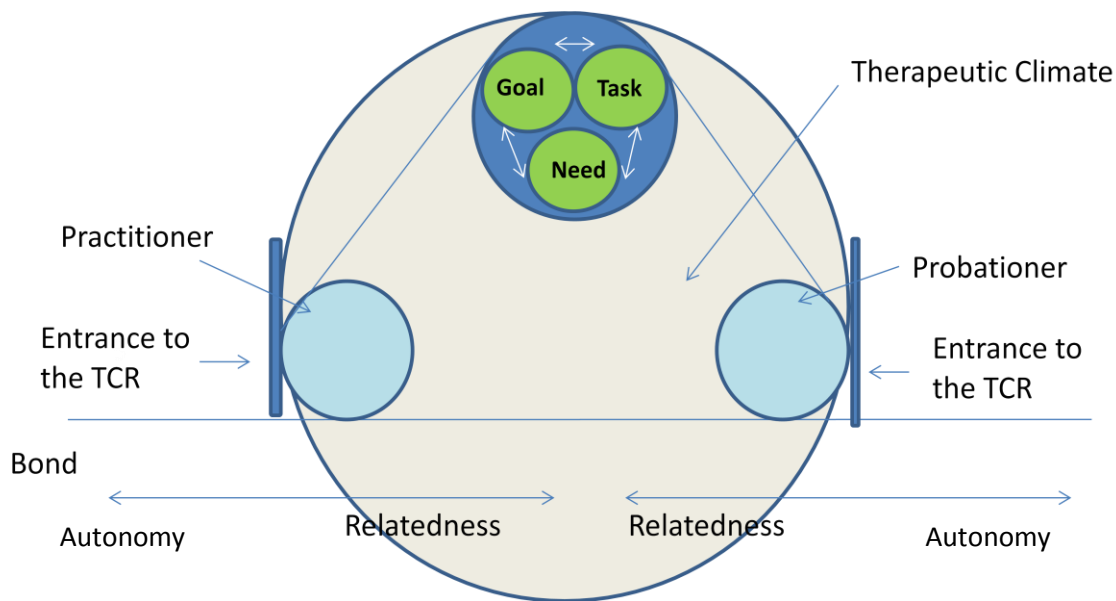


Fig.10. The Dynamic Model of TCRs: The application of “goal”, “task” and “need”.

Comparatively, some probationers referred to a positive therapeutic “space,” that was conceptualised with reference to the practitioner’s attributes. One 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 probationer 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). It is argued that this “climate” operates within a larger systemic system, as noted by Ross et al (2008), and that a key characteristic of this system is the operation of power from top-down processes. It is suggested that it is this systemic climate which contributes to the key differences between TRs and TCRs, as well as how practitioners represent

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 TCR, upon the execution of power by the practitioner, as a representative of Probation. This supports the findings from Ross et al (2008), who highlighted the importance of contextual factors, and reinforces the argument of Marlatt, Bowen, Chawla and Witkiewitz (2008), that TRs provide a foundation for establishing an “atmosphere” of trust.

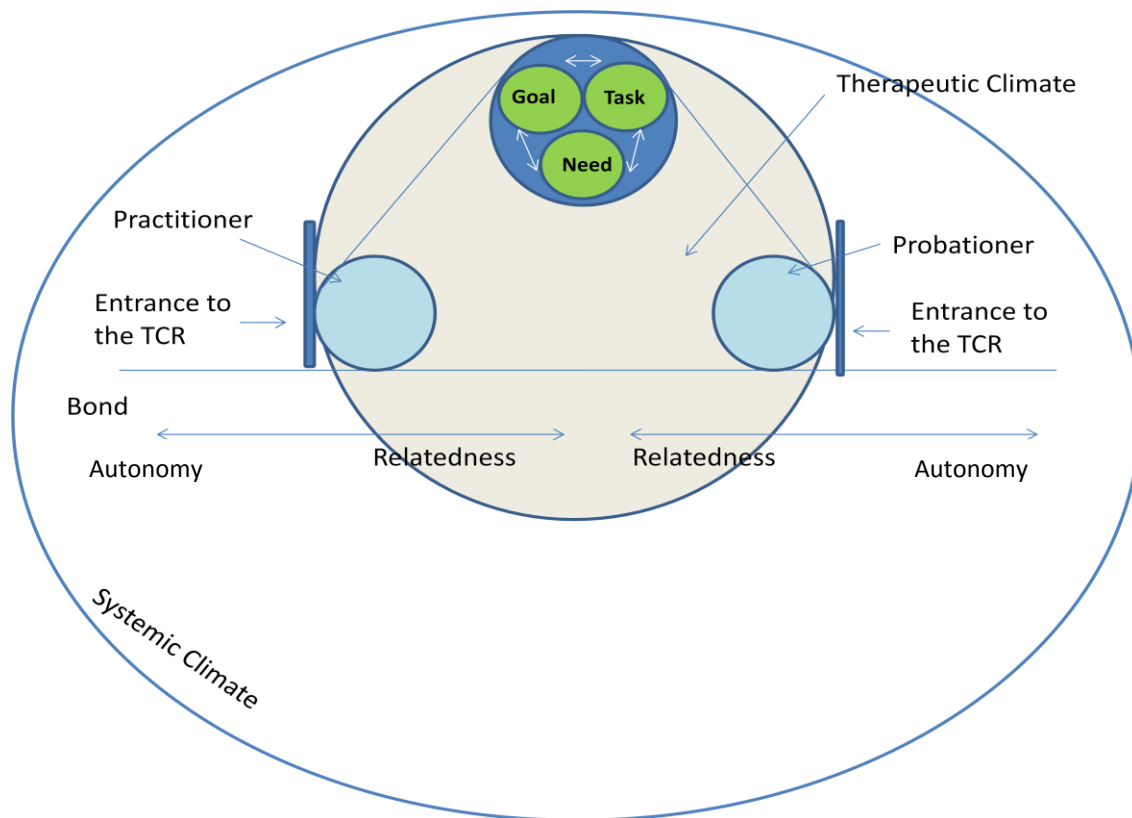


Fig. 11. The Dynamic Model of TCRs: Representing Systemic Climate

It would also seem (as illustrated in Fig. 11), that both players need to enter into a “place” that is therapeutic in nature and ideally, be therapeutically supported through broader systems. It is argued, in light of previous work (Lewis, 2012), some aspects

of practice, such as administrative tasks and targets, impact upon the flow of CRs and interrupt important processes that can secure a TCR. As illustrated in Figure 11, the point of entry into the TCR is created, whereupon both “*players*” are able to enter into a therapeutic climate, to allow the TCR to develop.

3. 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 consequentially, the role of the practitioner. As identified by Jackson, Bradford, Taylor and Shiner (2010), within a prison social order can be highly visible due to environment. How it therefore operates within Probation is of great importance, especially when attempting to gain a greater understanding of the mechanisms which operate. The visibility, or conscious presence of this power, was referred to by all probationers. For example, a probationer stated; *“[The] fact that the PO 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.”* Another probationer discussed power in connection with his current experience;

“My PO, 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 TRs in their purest form and TCRs, 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 probationers accepted the differing roles and when motivated, were still receptive to a TCR. From data analysis discussions, there seemed to be numerous ways power could be used within the context of relationships, both positively and negatively. One probationer highlighted the responsibility of the practitioner in creating a climate;

Researcher: "How do you see that relationship?"

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

Researcher: "Can you tell me more about that?"

Probationer: "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 probationers to undermine legitimacy and their perceived purpose of Probation, to support processes of change. This highlights a challenge for Probation 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 probationer confused. On a critical note, whilst a misuse of power was perceived by probationers, the extent to which this was a reality cannot be confirmed. With respect to Hacking's (1985) work, the probationer 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.

Whilst systemic power is inherent to CRs, it is argued that this power can be managed effectively and *can* be accepted more readily within the TCR, by some probationers. To illustrate, one probationer 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.*" Whilst the association between the TCR and power is complex, how power is addressed within relationships seems to determine legitimacy. For example, one probationer stated;

*"Some of my POs 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." (Emphasis highlighted in bold)*

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 probationer. To illustrate, one probationer 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, one probationer recognised the need for mutuality and perceived equality within relational work;

“It is important to have a good relationship with your PO, 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 TCR as well as indicated that moving on should be the focus within Probation practice, rather than looking back. This supports the ideas around strength-based approaches and how TCRs might facilitate processes of desistance. It is also observed here that the probationer 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*” probationers of the power differentials that exist, though there are instances when this power is less visible. This is not to say that systemic power can disappear from the CR/TCR, as CRs operates within this context. What it does suggest is that a practitioner has the control to alter the visibility of power, depending upon their behaviour. Whilst 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 inferred 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 TCRs further within Probation 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 TCR, though it can be *presented* separately within practice (as discussed in the next section). Whilst 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. Rogers (1967) described “*real*” encounters within the TR and highlighted that practitioners must enter the TR without the comfort, of what Thorne (1992) described as, “*a protective cloak of professional authority*.” I propose that this is the component of the TR that cannot be fully achieved in TCRs, 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.

The power of the *probationer* was also highlighted within the context of CRs. The following sections of transcript highlight how probationers used the relationship to meet their own needs, through more unhealthy means. It is argued that these preserved the probationer's autonomy, operating on the outskirts of the CR and contributed to a more superficial relationship, rather than a TCR. These captions from different probationers also highlight the implications in assessing probationer risk and how the focus of risk can be altered and controlled by the probationer, 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."

"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."

"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."

"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."

These statements infer that in order to assess risk and gain an accurate “*picture*” of the probationer, 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*,” which consequently leads to a depiction of risk that is clouded (see Fig. 12). Comparatively, if the “*players*” are too far away, as they refuse to engage or enter the TCR, risk is blurred through the probationer’s account of their lives, which may be duplicitous due to a lack of trust (see. Fig.14). It is therefore proposed that there is a Therapeutic Frame (TF) to the TCR, which can be illustrated in Figures 12, 13 and 14. These figures demonstrate how the component of “*risk*” can be incorporated within the Dynamic Model of TCRs. The TF consists of two boundaries to differentiate between collusion (represented by over-involvement or misuse of power through passivity (1)), inclusion (represented by the therapeutic climate and mutuality (2)) and exclusion (represented by under-involvement or misuse of power through dominance (3)).

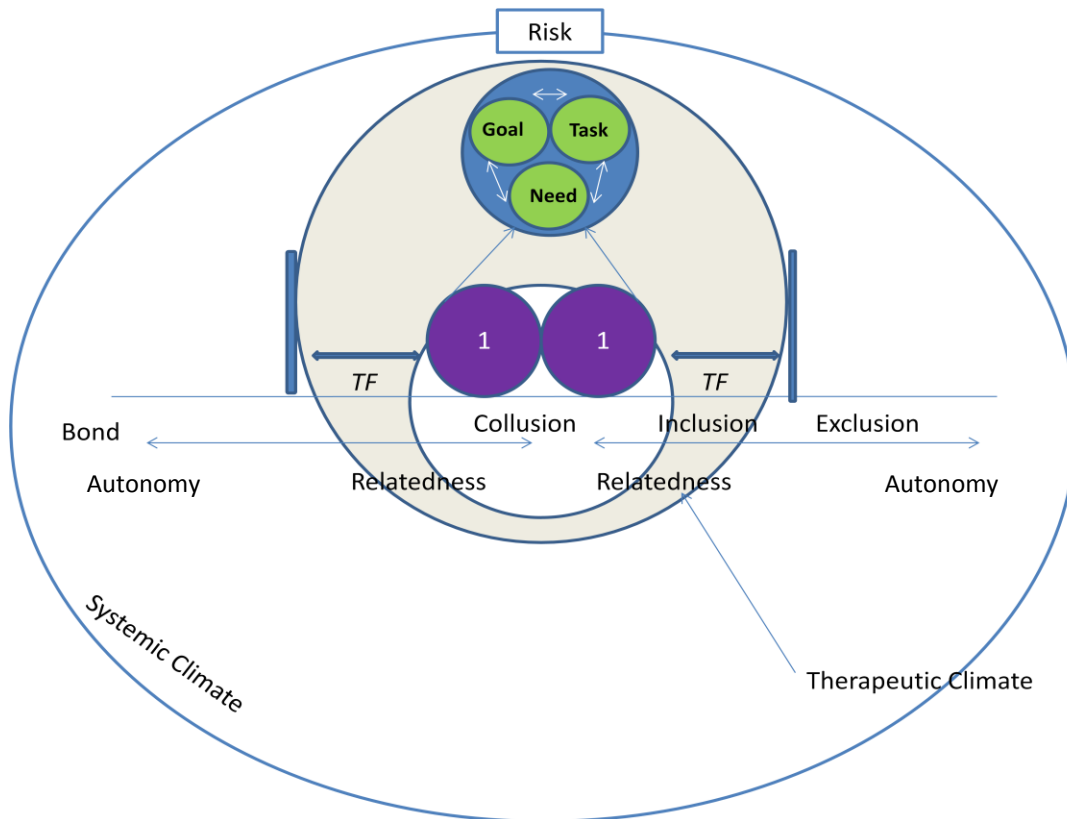


Fig.12: The Dynamic Model of TCRs: A representation of a collusive position.

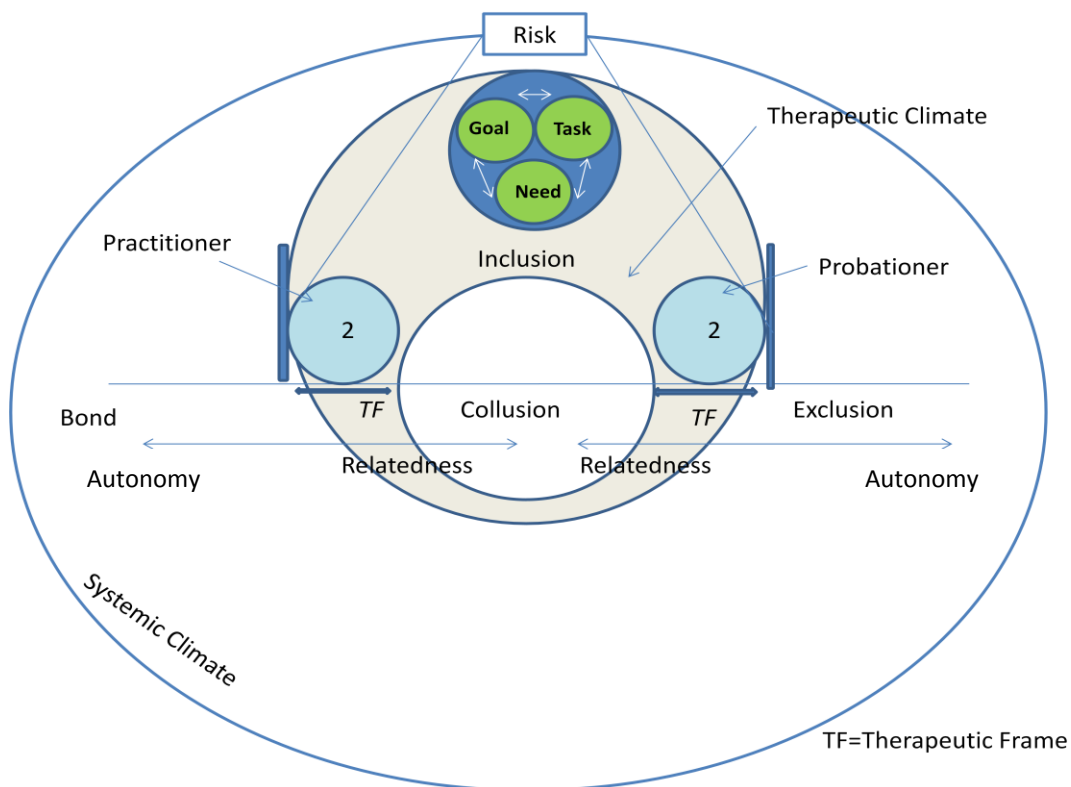


Fig.13: The Dynamic Model of TCRs: A representation of an inclusionary position

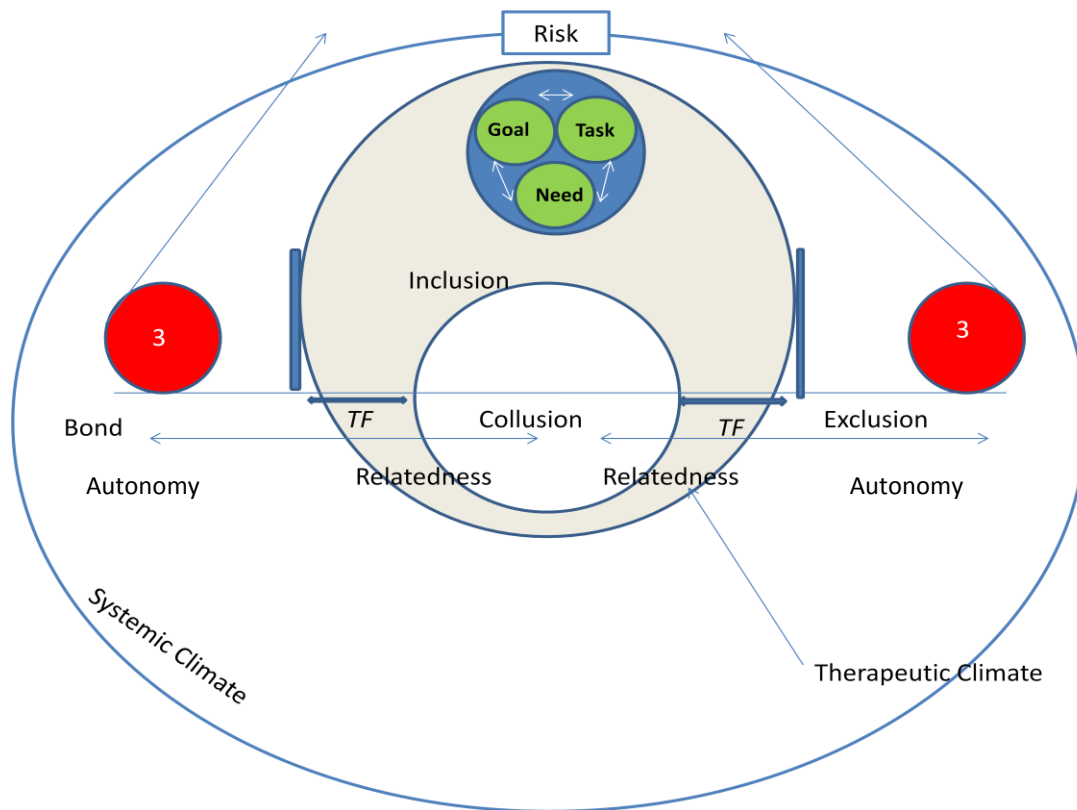


Fig. 14: The Dynamic Model of TCRs: A representation of an exclusionary position.

In light of this, it would suggest that there is a third “space,” where boundaries are loosened and probationers perceive their practitioner to be that of a friend, instead of a professional. To illustrate, one probationer 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 CRs. Whilst Sparks, Bottoms and Hay (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. It is argued that this model highlights one of the reasons why collusion may jeopardise security, as “risk” 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.

4. The Role of TCRs in facilitating other Processes.

The importance of effective positioning within the TF seemed to be linked to other processes, especially that of desistance. During an analysis session, one probationer acknowledged that a probationer’s conceptualisation of the TCR is largely influenced by whether they have the motivation to address their problems and offending behaviour. He 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 with Ross et al’s (2008) work and reinforced that relationships evolve over a probationer’s life-course, based on their motivations. The following quote highlights a possible transition that was experienced by a probationer:

Probationer: “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.”

Researcher: "Why is there a change do you think?"

Probationer: "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 probationers reflected on past identities and approaches to the CR, for example:

Probationer: "I have had some POs that I have spun on my finger and I've written loads of self cert [certificate] forms. I wrote 10 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!"

Researcher: "Looking back on it, how do you see it?"

Probationer: "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 illustrated that TCRs are not purely determined by what the offender wants, but more so, what the offender needs. The process of desistance featured within the probationer's accounts and it became increasingly evident that relationships influenced transformative processes. For example, one probationer 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 TCRs 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 probationer, it is proposed that this may support other processes that are at play. It should be noted here that probationer movement is ultimately controlled by the probationer. This work is congruent to Barry's (2007) discussion relating to the "*reciprocal*" relationship within Probation practice, as she inferred 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 TCRs that are co-constructed, though it is acknowledged that systemic climate would be different between correctional contexts. This would support the notion of Liebling (2007), as she revealed that the utilisation of power differed, depending upon the prison she examined. This point, if applied to Probation practice, highlights even further complexity as the representation of power may differ between Probation services and different practitioners.

To conclude, it is suggested that if practitioners can utilise their skills effectively, probationers can be encouraged to move into the TF. If this is achieved, it is proposed that "*need*", "*task*" and "*goal*" can be collaboratively addressed and "*risk*" can be more accurately assessed. Consequently, this may increase the likelihood of change processes occurring that may contribute to desistance. Further work to

examine *how* these constructs operate within CRs would continue to develop an understanding of the mechanisms of TCRs.

Whilst it is acknowledged that some practitioners may not wish to strive for TCRs within their practice, the benefits of such relationships are significant. Through focus group discussions, practitioners recognised how rewarding TCRs were and the degree of satisfaction they experienced from supporting processes of desistance could be felt in the room. Further work in revealing additional benefits of TCRs within Probation would strengthen the rationale for TCRs and continue to promote greater investment in relationships in the future.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: RELATIONAL NARRATIVES

This section is dedicated to the relational narrative and the research questions;

1. How do probationers and practitioners describe the relational narrative?
2. What elements of good practice can maximise the likelihood of relationship success, from the perspective of the probationer and practitioner?

The results will be organised in a specific way that aligns with the structure of the literature review; the stages of a TCR will be addressed in turn, drawing upon the literature and results, to conceptualise each stage and consider aspects of good practice.

Similar to the work of Ryals (2011), the main stages associated with a TCR were broadly described by both “*players*” as:

1. Relational pre-conceptions
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 did not necessarily represent relationships (due to their non-linearity), but were utilised to understand relational narratives. It was found that within the two separate focus groups, these stages were defined almost identically and this was additionally supported through discussions with probationers, 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 probationers took several months before “*something clicked*”, with another practitioner 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 probationers. This supports the propositions of Nagy et al (1990), who stated that practitioners may be more aware of the more detailed processes, such as ruptures. To illustrate this point, Figure 15 and 16 provide two typical examples of a practitioner and probationer narrative respectively. It should be recorded here that the same relationship was not examined by probationer and practitioner 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 probationers, and this may be due to the role that each plays within the relationship. Whilst a practitioner may attend to their emotions during the relational narrative, they are also monitoring the behaviour of the probationer and this may have influenced the finer details observed here. Comparatively, probationers seemed to construct their narrative in relation to their own experience, rather than focusing upon practitioner behaviour during the narrative. The findings inferred that a TCR does not always “*arrive*” but instead, becomes a negative experience, as highlighted in my previous research (Lewis, 2014b).

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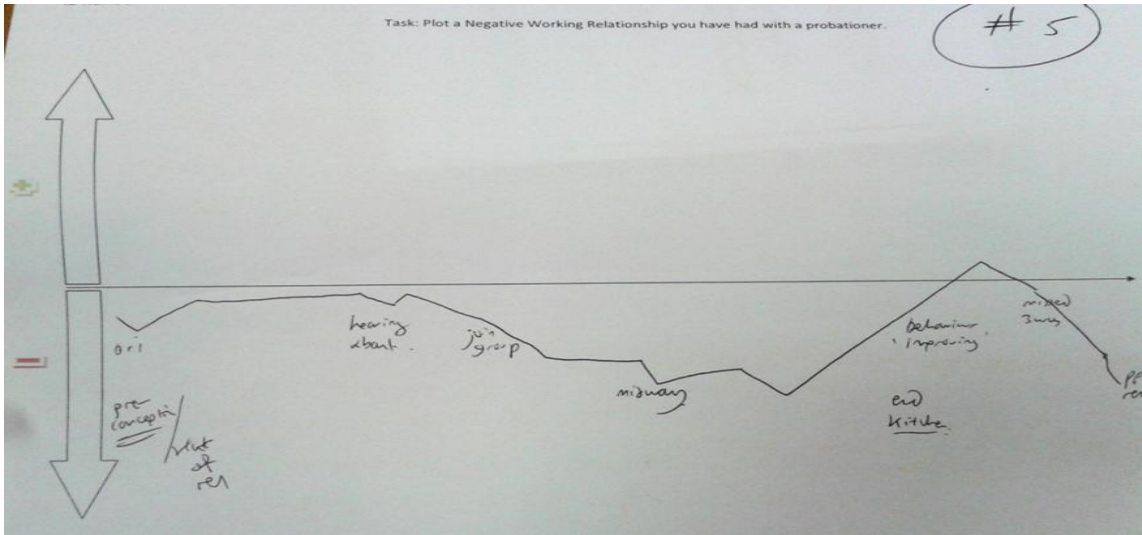


Fig.15: One typical example of how relational narratives were constructed by a practitioner

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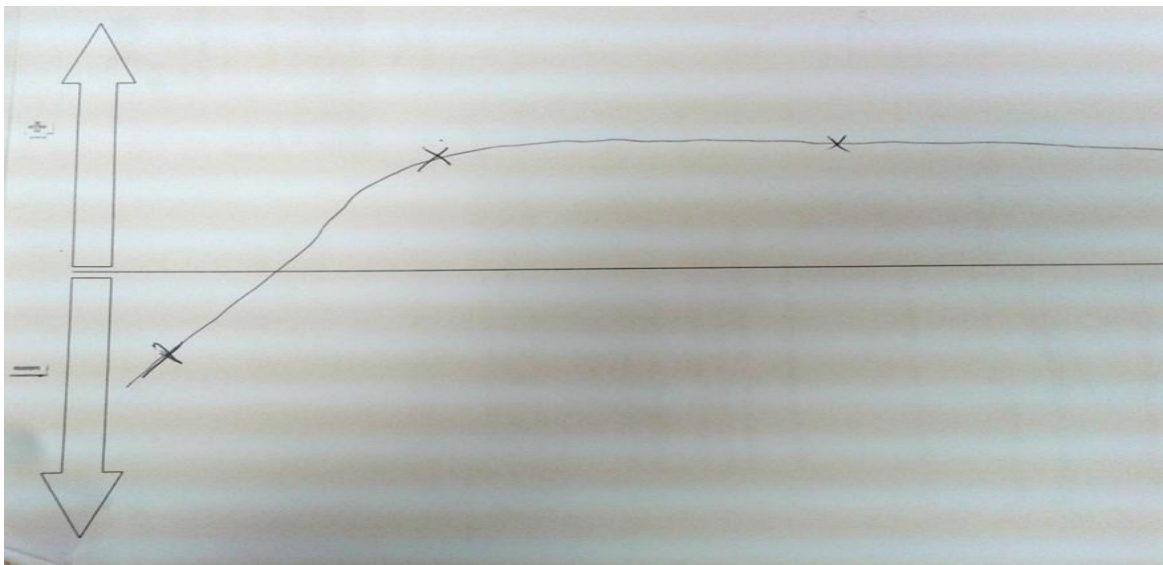


Fig.16: One typical example of how relational narratives were constructed by a probationer.

(i) *Relational Pre-conceptions*

In support of Ross et al (2008), Forchuk, (1994) and Safran and Muran (2003), relational pre-conceptions on the impending relationship, were evident in the data.

One practitioner 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 said; *“It [the probationer’s file] can give you an insight into what type of relationships they have had with POs before...you are forming a lot of opinions before you ever meet them.”* One practitioner discussed how pre-determined 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.”

Whilst some practitioners only referred to how it shaped their ideas around probationers, others demonstrated a more critical stance, with an appreciation of movement and a lack of focus on the full *“picture.”* One practitioner 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 highlighted the danger of anchoring such pre-conceptions and commented how expectations around the probationer can be self-fulfilling. Probationers also described this process from their perspective, one probationer 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 probationer 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 pre-conceptions, it was inferred by both *"players"* that a relational preparation period is required, where practitioners can prepare for a TCR. Particular sub-themes emerged from the focus groups, though probationers referred generally to the need to be open-minded and non-judgemental. One practitioner outlined the importance of reminding oneself of humanistic factors, which is congruent to the arguments of McMurrin (2002). For example, one 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 probationer, 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. One 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 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. One 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, p.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 probationer. One practitioner stated; “*Look at what we can achieve*”, another added; “*Look at the successes and foundations you can build on*”, a third practitioner answered; “*[It is about] looking for their assets and resources.*” In conjunction with humanistic strategies, one practitioner 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 were congruent to the work of both Rex (1999) and Appleton (2010) and are closely linked to accepting the probationer as a person, creating a separation between the individual and their behaviour. Whilst 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). It is argued 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. It is argued that in light of political and systemic restraints, the humanistic qualities that formed the basis of Probation values are under threat and could be lost, at great cost. As Simon and Feeley (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). It is argued a humanistic approach is challenged due to the context in which TCRs sit. 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 positive change processes. 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, pre-conceptions of the CR exist and impact upon practitioner behaviour. Further work to explore the relational schemas that both "*players*" hold, would increase the knowledge in this area. To address inevitable pre-conceptions, the need to be open-minded, mindful, hopeful and critical, were identified in the data, as a way of *preparing* for the TCR. This may increase the likelihood of practitioners feeling fully prepared for a TCR and receptive to a TCR, prior to meeting probationers. This movement into the TF can be illustrated diagrammatically, as represented in Figure 17.

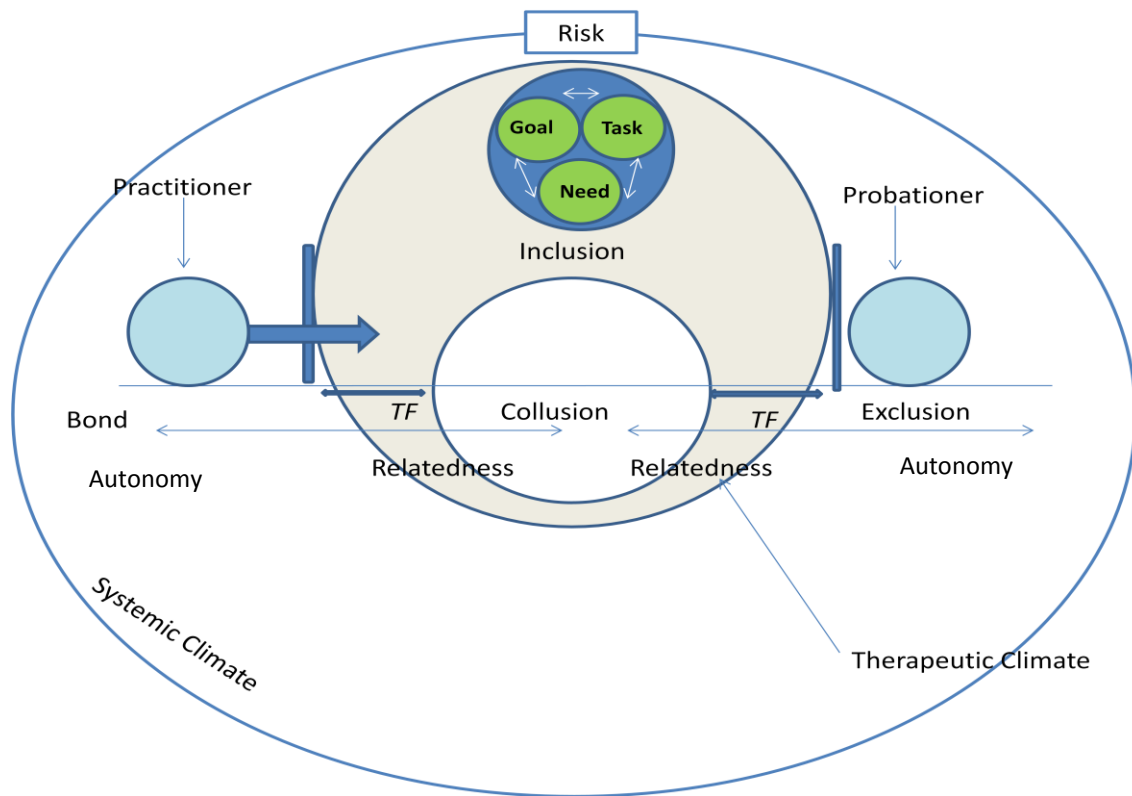


Fig.17: The movement of the practitioner into the TF, in preparation for the TCR.

(ii) *Activating the TCR*

The first meeting has been 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 one practitioner stating; “*An important part is the state they leave,*” another highlighted; “*What they 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 inferred 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. One 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, probationers seemed to follow similar processes of assessment and made particular reference to a “*sense*” of relatedness. During the analysis phase, a probationer 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 such as; “*Within two minutes, I knew the kind of person they were, by the vibe they gave off*”; “*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 he was just natural and I just thought it’d be a nice relationship,*” and; “*we connected.*” Whilst Morgan et al (1982) highlighted that during these initial moments of the relationship, “*clinical wisdom*” occurs for the practitioner, it is argued that this is also the case for experienced probationers. However this is defined, it is argued that an initial assessment by both parties occurs and influences 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 the probationer feeling at ease. It became evident that probationers felt varying degrees of anxiety prior to the first meeting, describing their emotions as; “*fearful*”, “*nervous*” or “*anxious*,” as probationers explained there was a

lot “*at stake*,” if they did not relate to their PO. Reducing these feelings seemed vital to the success of that 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.*” However, during the probationer interviews, I was personally moved by the level of anxiety that was experienced and the importance of creating ease.

One probationer 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 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.*” One probationer 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 PO, you know instantly whether you will then get on with them, whether you can open up to them, that’s what I’ve found.”

Other probationers linked initial negative experiences that may “turn off” the probationer, as described by Bonta et al (2008). One probationer 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”*. A probationer 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 you do, mate?” And I said, “I’m doing all right”, just very respectful.”

The demonstration of belief was also evident from the results. One 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 probationers such as; *“His heart was in the right place.”* This belief was indicated by the practitioner’s behaviour, one probationer 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 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.”*

Whilst most probationers suggested that they make an initial decision to engage in the TCR within the first meeting, it appeared that those with negative schemata, took a little longer. One probationer described his experience:

Probationer: "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."

Researcher: "What do you think made it like that?"

Probationer: "I'd say she cared, she actually cared."

This suggested that whilst 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 TCR is challenging due to past entrenched schemata. 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 narrative and was discussed at this stage. Firstly, it was acknowledged by practitioners on a broad level that probationers need to accept and "enter" into the TF. By doing this, one 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. It is proposed that numerous "hooks" exist that

encourage legitimacy, including collaborative language, boundary clarification, rapport building, legitimate challenging and consultancy. To illustrate, one probationer outlined this; *“See you, 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.”* One probationer recalled the words of his practitioner; *“She said; “I’ve got a plan for you,”* another 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 whilst 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 probationer-centred practice, instead of offence-centred practice. One probationer 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 creates some tension between focusing upon individual need and assessing risk thoroughly. However, it is argued that by developing a TCR, both “risk” and “need” will be identified more accurately and readily, due to an engaging relationship.

Another “hook” that featured was the process of highlighting the benefits of Probation and what was on offer. To illustrate, one probationer 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.”*

Practitioners also discussed ways in which they could promote buy-in at this early stage. One 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, you can always fall back on that in a discussion, even if it goes wrong in a session, like football...it just*

gives you something to fall back on.” A probationer 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 referred to the use of collaborative language (e.g. “*what might **we** want to achieve during this order?*”) The understanding and acknowledgement of probationer “need” seemed to indicate a sense of collaboration and greater legitimacy. To illustrate, one probationer 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.””

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

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

Probationer: "Straightaway."

Researcher: "What made you think that?"

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

Researcher: "Can you describe it to me?"

Probationer: "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 PO 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 the probationer. Whilst 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 a probationer 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, TCRs are more likely to emerge. Role clarification becomes increasingly important in rapid organisational change and ambiguities are likely to exist within the current context.

In connection to power, the promotion of autonomy also emerged within the findings. To illustrate, one probationer 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 a probationer to move into the TF, the probationer needs to accept what is on offer. One 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 TCR, which includes the *“acknowledgement of the imbalance of power”* (practitioner). One practitioner discussed how this process can be achieved effectively, based on the practitioner’s 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.”

Probationers also described how boundaries can be established mutually, as a way to promote legitimacy, one stated: *"In the first meeting he said; "You be straight with me and I'll be straight with you."* Another probationer 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 bi-directional and without it, probationers are more likely to walk away of the CR. One probationer said:

"I've had quite a few POs 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 TCR 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 TF and contribute to the anchoring of a probationer, 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 CR/TCR. Practitioners can do this through collaborative working, injections of hope and reflective practice. *"Hooks"* may be used to encourage probationers to move into the TF, though they could also be used to anchor probationers 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

probationers, once they have entered into the TF, anchoring can also work against the practitioner. A consistent observation from the probationer interviews related to how some probationers, with very entrenched views regarding Probation (and its legitimacy), can be anchored outside of the TF. 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 TCR is more likely to emerge. This is not to say that these attempts will result in the movement of a probationer into the TF, though through persistence and hope, it is argued the chance of success is greater. Further work in this area would certainly increase understanding of how legitimacy operates within this therapeutic correctional context. In light of the individualistic nature of TCRs, 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 homogenous groups. 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 Probation, 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, Probation will 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 TCRs, at this stage in the relationship, it is suggested that firstly, the practitioner anchors themselves within the TF through “*injections of hope*” (Maruna, 2012), making their position robust and secure.

Secondly, as indicated in Figure 18, the probationer encourages the movement of the practitioner (through “*pulling*”), into the therapeutic climate through a variety of ways.

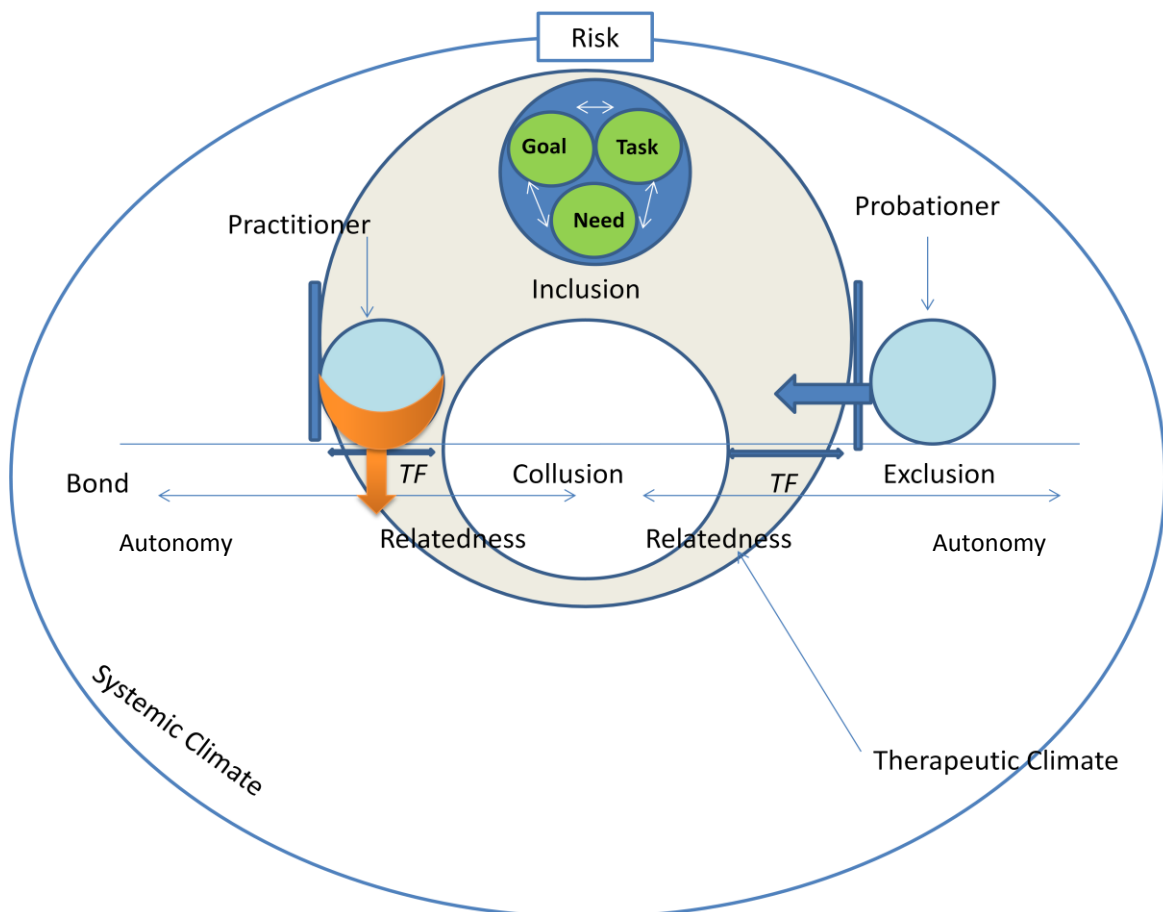


Fig. 18: The initial stages of the TCR: The possible anchoring and movement of “the players”

Through these two processes, it is suggested that the practitioner is more receptive to TCRs and the probationer moves into a position, where a TCR can form. It is acknowledged that two corresponding challenges exist, which need to be addressed by practitioner, probationer and senior management; that either “*player*” *wants* to move and has 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 probationer. Within this instance, senior management need to actively support the practitioner, through the SEEDS framework, 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 TF.

(iii) Developing a TCR

This section discusses the data relating to the period after the first meeting. 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 TCR had “*arrived.*” To illustrate, one practitioner commented; “*When you are not just the one talking, when there is two way respect...the balance is equal between you,*” another 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, 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

probationer that they were being listened to. One practitioner stated; *“You don’t go in challenging straight away.”* There seemed to be a specific time when challenging became more direct, with one practitioner stating; *“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 congruent to my previous work (Lewis, 2014b), 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 TCR, which was discussed by Ryals (2011), during his work with young offenders.

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

“[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 PO (I have been here) and then they think...“why should I employ you, if your PO 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?”

“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.””

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 probationer, whilst the other is positioned further away from the probationer and does not trust them. It is suggested that due to a development of legitimacy in the probationer at this stage, a TCR is more likely to develop.

Traits linked to legitimacy and “*climate*” included honesty, as one probationer elaborated:

Probationer: “...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 firstly indicated a “*hook*” of hope that is described within the first meeting, and then, how, the probationer is beginning to trust his practitioner. In respect to this probationer, 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.

Probationer: 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.”

Researcher: “And what did that say to you?”

Probationer: “It just gave me a bit more confidence in myself.”

Researcher: "Was that in the first meeting?"

Probationer: "Yeah, yeah, it was in the first meeting."

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

*Probationer: "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."*

(Probationer is referring to a planned arrest at the office.)

These findings demonstrate that relational formation can take time and yet, through perseverance, negative relational schemata can be "*unhooked*" and positive schemata can be nurtured.

A final aspect of "*climate*" that was referred to was that of respect. One probationer 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 probationer 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.*" Another 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. One probationer referenced it in terms of "need"; *"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."* The aspect of legitimacy arose within this complex mixture of different constructs. One probationer described:

*"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 strop and that, but [named practitioner], he just listens and he sorts out what **we** need sorting."*

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 feedback 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. Due to the possibility that a probationer may experience multiple TCRs at one time (e.g. PO, drug worker, programme facilitator), it is difficult to establish what TCRs (or what elements of the relationship), contribute 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 probationer in different directions. For example, positive relational experiences may be operating with some rehabilitative interventions, whilst these may be undermined by other aspects of practice.

The assessment of individual need, through listening, was recognised by all participants, though there also seemed to be a development of “sense,” with respect to practitioner expertise. To illustrate, one probationer 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 probationer’s commented that they felt their practitioner had a past of criminality, one stated; “*[I] got that impression, that he was an ex-criminal, because of the way he was.*” Whilst 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 probationers 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 reality is unclear, as a possible third “*player*” would alter and impact upon the didactic relationship between practitioner and probationer. 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 probationers seemed to refer to a proactive approach of “*keeping promises*” (probationer). Whilst “*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 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 in

respect to what they can offer and to clarify to the probationer, which resources they can access. One probationer discussed the first TCR he had:

“It was something new, because I never used to tell the PO 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 inferred that through a proactive approach, development of a relationship can create pathways to other therapeutic outcomes, which are conducive to change. In relation to a proactive approach, probationers 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 particularly 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, p.561)), is an important aspect of this stage. Whilst Rooney (1992) and Jones and Alcabes (1993) highlighted the importance of the client accepting the practitioner, it is argued that this is bi-directional 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 TCRs, through the building of legitimacy and collaborative practice.

(iv) *Maintaining/Sustaining the TCR*

The process of maintaining or sustaining the TCR was highlighted by both participant groups. As one practitioner put it; *“There is no pulling in different directions.”* Whilst it was initially conceptualised 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 is felt that this stage of the relationship is not currently 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 compliancy. One practitioner noted; *“You may have to “interrupt” the relationship to remind them of your role”*, inferring a separation of role with the relationship, as previously proposed. Practitioners discussed how compliancy 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 one 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 of practice occurs, it could lead to exclusion or inclusion respectively. Firstly, the deepening of challenges was referred simply by a practitioner as; “*push em*” (the probationer). Practitioners acknowledged that during this stage, probationers should be encouraged to have a “*voice*” and speak honestly, one probationer identified this, stating; “*I think it’s just about being honest with people, your PO is honest with you and you are honest with them.*” Feedback was also recognised as important during this time. One probationer stated; “*It is important to let them know if they are doing well,*” another commented:

Probationer: “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.”

Researcher: “And how is she (the practitioner) dealing with those things?”

Probationer: “She’s just talking to me and reassuring me.”

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 probationers and the trend that emerged, relating to the relationship as a “*place*” for learning. These findings were congruent to 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 discourse and the practitioners approach. To illustrate, one probationer 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.” Another probationer referred to his current PO 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 probationer described how his practitioner had created a balance between relatedness and autonomy and stated; *“He tried to give you responsibility, but keeps an eye on you at the same time, he done it really good.”*

Probationers 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 expressed as important by the probationers, which could be identified as *“hooks”* of hope. This included the advocacy of probationers during this period of the relational narrative. To illustrate, one probationer stated:

Probationer: “I’ve never had a PO 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.”

Researcher: “Has that had an impact on you?”

Probationer: “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 be all right.”

This supports the notion of Luborsky (1976), who proposed that due to greater relatedness, the two “*players*” within the TR embark on a “*joint struggle*,” which demonstrates mutual commitment. The shift in perspective was also significant to this particular probationer, 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 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 TR, which is identified by Luborsky (1984) and Forchuk (1994). Fitzsimons and Key (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 probationer within the TF. It would also seem that whilst “*hooks*” of hope through advocacy are promoted within practice, there is also the process of “*unhooking*” maladaptive behaviours and thoughts that might promote 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 Probation, in order for such ventures to hold legitimacy in their own right.

With reference to the Dynamic Model of TCRs, the movement of both “*players*” should, ideally operate within the TF, as indicated below in Figure 19. 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 TF. Whilst this illustrates an ideal snapshot of this stage in the relational narrative, the occurrence of ruptures (as discussed next) 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 probationer, as the TCR evolves and deepens.

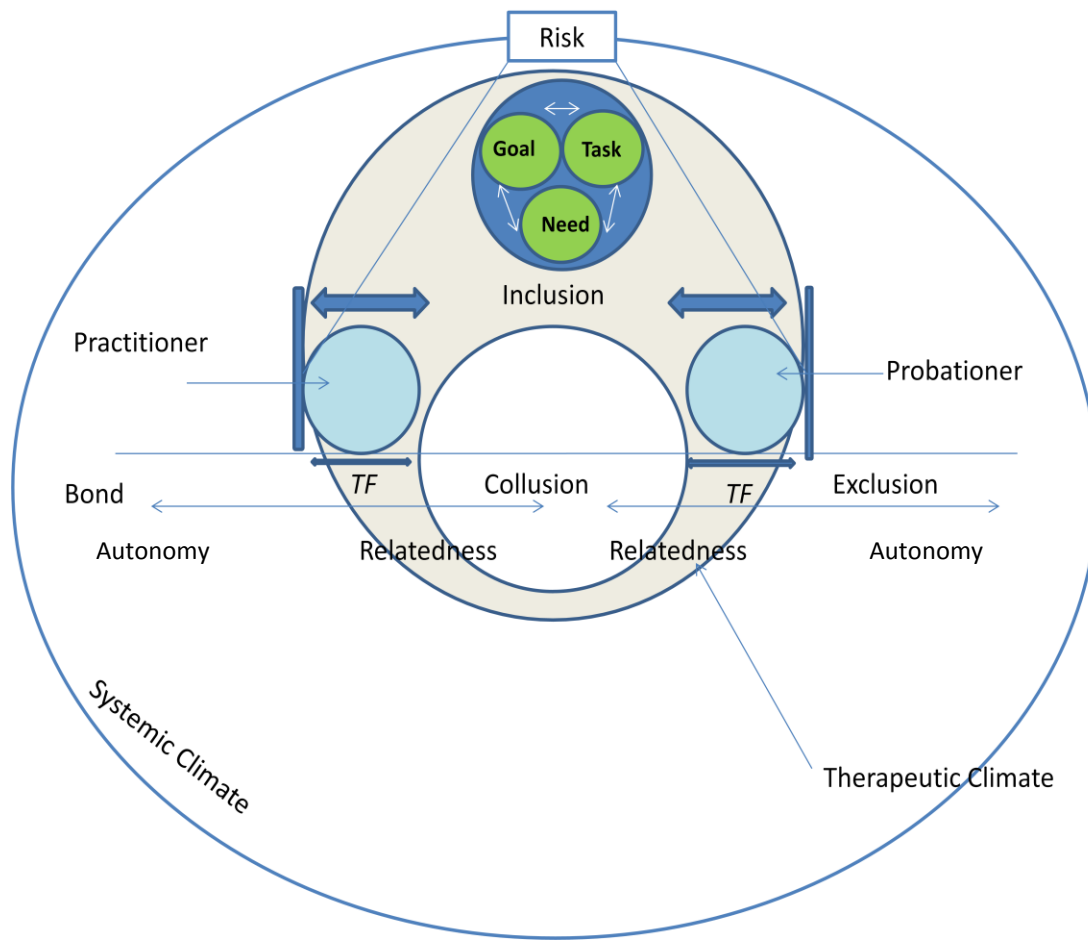


Fig. 19: The “ideal” movement of the “players” at the working stages of the TCR.

(v) *Preparing to end the TCR*

The final stage of the relationship was described as a preparation to end the TCR. During this stage, a promotion and drive for 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 a probationer stated with humour; “*dancing around the bush.*”

By reflecting on the data, at the beginning of the relationship, a practitioner is drawing a probationer closer in order to encourage them to engage. Comparatively, at the end of the relationship, the practitioner now needs to encourage the

probationer 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.

Firstly, nearly all of the “*negative*” relationships that were discussed ended prematurely. As I discussed these relationships, it became increasingly evident that probationers distanced themselves through the activation of their own autonomy. This included; re-offending; breaching “*on purpose*”; going “*on the run*” and; moving area. The following caption from a probationer 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 and done 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, 2014b), 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 probationers 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. Probationers discussed how they were “*gutted*,” “*saddened*” and described

the feeling that they would “miss” the practitioner. These two captions from different probationers 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.”

“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.”

A probationer, who was very withdrawn at interview initially, discussed this openly with me, at the end of the interview:

Probationer: “Towards the end of the licence, I started slipping off the rails again.”

Researcher: “Do you think that impacted on your relationship with him (the practitioner)?”

Probationer: “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 Muran and Safran (2003), the termination of a TR 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 TCR was described by both "*players*" as a positive moment, where autonomy of the probationer was embraced and the probationer's achievements and progress were celebrated. Probationers 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."*" Another probationer stated 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 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 probationer interviews:

“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 probationer for feedback as a demonstration that they had a “voice” and rights. One practitioner 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.”*

The results highlight the need to empower, promote agency and hope about the future. The process of de-labelling the probationer, 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.

Whilst the findings did feature the *“bittersweet”* endings expressed by Ryals (2011), it also highlighted the premature and irrecoverably rupturing of relationships, in Probation 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 TCRs 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. Within an ideal scenario, if positive changes were beginning to occur for the probationer and they perceived this to be of value, an extension could be collaboratively agreed. This possibility is highly unlikely within current practice but irrespective of systemic constraints, it is argued that time with a probationer is time well spent and that practitioners strive for empowering endings within TCRs when possible.

To summarise the findings, Table 5 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. Whilst 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.

Preparing for the TCR	Be Mindful	Critically Reflect	Build Hope		Active Listening to self, peers and
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	“Hooks” of Hope-Advocacy/ Perspective Shift	Deepen Challenging to promote “unhooking”	
Preparing to End the TCR	Celebrate Achievement	Share Feelings	Transfer Hope through Empowerment	Promote Agency	

Table 5: A table of principles that correspond to each stage of the relational narrative.

It is argued 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. 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 the narrative, whilst discussing what variables were at play throughout the relational journey. Whilst 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 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 CPD is integrated more heavily within practice.

Lambert and Simon (2008) highlighted that the practice of mindfulness has been found to assist in developing TRs with numerous tools and exercises that can assist in this development. With the implementation of the SEEDS, a framework to develop reflective skills is currently in operation in most Probation Trusts. Having considered the broad stages of relational narrative, this project will now focus on relational micro processes; the identification and resolution of ruptures in correctional work.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: CORRECTIONAL RUPTURES

Whilst the term “*rupture*” was not a familiar term amongst practitioners or probationers, 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 whilst working with probationers. I was interested to examine how correctional ruptures differed from those that were discussed within psychotherapeutic literature and formulated two research questions in response to this:

1. How do probationers and practitioners describe ruptures within CRs?
2. How might practitioners repair ruptures within Probation practice?

This section will describe the specific ruptures that were identified and then discuss ways in which ruptures can be recovered, within Probation practice. It is believed that the ruptures featured here are just *some* of the many ruptures which 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. Therefore, principles to repair ruptures have been proposed as a detailed formulaic approach is considered inappropriate, due to the dynamic and individualised nature of these relationships. This is supported by Safran and Muran’s work (2003, p.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), Probation practitioners seemed more aware of ruptures, when compared with probationers. 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 probationers rarely acknowledged ruptures when TCRs were discussed and focused on the positive aspects alone.

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, a probationer and I discussed our own relationship and through time, we were able to identify some key ruptures that occurred during our relational journey. It is argued that ruptures can be identified through discussion (though some will inevitably remain unconscious) and an examination of these could be of great value.

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*.”

1. Boundaries and Duplicity

Firstly, both “*players*” discussed how a lack of clarity around boundaries and roles could contribute to a moment of strain, or complete withdrawal from the CR. This seemed to be linked to the probationer’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 probationer-practitioner boundaries, created a moment of exclusion and a movement away from the practitioner. To illustrate, probationers discussed examples of possible ruptures which included; a “*poor*” report that was not shared with the probationer prior to a court appearance and; a “*covert*” arrest at the Probation office during a Probation appointment. For example, one probationer 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, another probationer stated:

“A couple of POs were not how I would expect a PO 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 stated plainly:

“Oh yeah, course they’re sly, POs 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. Therefore, it is difficult to alter and challenge these scenarios, but it is possible to prepare the probationer for such eventualities. As discussed within the findings relating to the initial meeting with a probationer, a clear establishment of “*role*” is required in order to avoid role ambiguity of the practitioner. Whilst this may, in itself, be perceived as a rupture by the probationer, 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. This not only highlights the importance of future rupture research, but also acknowledges the challenging nature of the work that is undertaken.

During the participatory analysis, an ex-probationer stated that by enforcing power through “sly arrests”, mutual trust is threatened and compromised, as if a TCR were *conditional* upon compliance. He stated:

“I have always been honest [within TCRs]...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 probationer’s behaviour) and how it is projected onto the TCR. 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 a probationer may feel that trust has been breached. However, in light of the responsibility to protect the public (and avoid public scrutiny), TCRs are jeopardised as systemic processes override the TCR and ultimately lead to the probationer feeling duplicitous practice has occurred. This again illuminates the tensions and contradictions within TCRs and how a practitioner may need to grapple with advocating a probationer one day and activating a breach the next.

Similarly, unclear boundaries and the feelings of duplicity were discussed by practitioners with respect to ruptures. One practitioner stated in response to the question; what may threaten a relationship?

Practitioner: "Mention the two words "Children's Services"

Researcher: "What's that about?"

Practitioner: "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."

Another Practitioner: "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 probationer, at one moment in time. It highlighted moments within the relationship, where probationers 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 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 probationer 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 probationer 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 TCR is problematic, as enforcement is characteristic of Probation 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 TCR to co-exist alongside the systemic restraints of enforcement, so long as the probationer is informed of boundaries and role. It is argued 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 hybridization 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. 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. Currently, such a separation is near impossible, but *how* it is presented by the practitioner may be of greater importance.

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 conceptualised in different ways, to produce similar outcomes. The visibility of power was discussed in relation to the extent practitioners highlighted power within CRs, 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) featured in the literature review. 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 probationer. One probationer 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 probationer’s power, as one 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 interconnection 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) regarding disciplinary power, it would seem that disciplinary power is bi-directional to the extent practitioners may become docile, as a response to a dominant probationer 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). This would infer that probationers 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. 20. Within this figure, the practitioner is using their autonomy to exert power within the relationship, which subsequently moves the practitioner outside of the TF and into a position of exclusion.

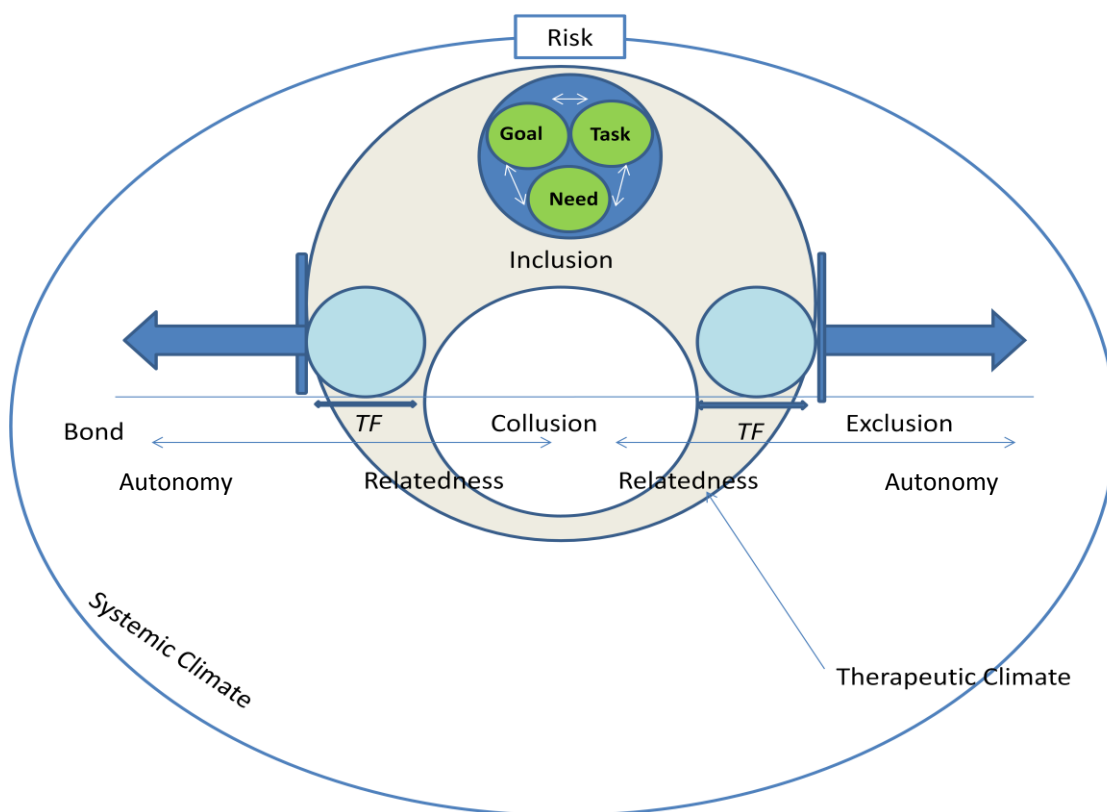


Fig. 20: The movement of both “players” due to a power rupture.

A probationer described how, within the first meeting with their PO, the visibility of practitioner power was evident:

“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:

Probationer: “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.”

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), through the work of Harper (1989), identified this as a confrontational rupture. Rice and Greenberg (1984) argued that when a rupture occurs, a number of markers exist that indicate a rupture has occurred (e.g. aggression). This presents numerous challenges for the Probation practitioner, including the need to be aware of subtle adaptations within their own actions and their ability to recognise markers and address them effectively. From the data, it emerged that whilst a probationer may signal, through their behaviour, that a rupture has occurred (e.g. withdrawn behaviour), practitioners also have *internal* markers that indicate to them that a rupture has occurred (e.g. feelings of frustration, hurt and guilt). 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. Whilst it may be questioned 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 a probationer 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 was helpful for the practitioner and whilst such discussions created initial unease, valued growth seemed to follow. With support, it is argued 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.

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; *“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 stated *“I will push and push and push until they get empathy...”* Another described it; *“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 one practitioner put it; *“a crack-down: these are the boundaries!”* 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 probationers described the paralysing effects of power ruptures. To illustrate, a probationer 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 POs.”

Alternatively, a practitioner 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 normative and that an honest discussion is appropriate. 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. Through the SEEDS initiative, significant developments in peer learning and observational work could support the process of rupture resolution, though this is contingent upon an engaged practitioner and a supportive senior management.

From the data, probationers also struggled with confrontational practitioners. One probationer described his experience:

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

Probationer: "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 be used and manifest itself, contributing or reducing the likelihood of a rupture. As highlighted in my previous work (Lewis, 2014b), challenging a probationer'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 probationer as an "*abuse of power*". This could create a stale-mate position in some instances as the practitioner is anchored outside the TF and cannot easily (or has no motivation to) encourage probationer movement. It is therefore argued that, in order to reduce ruptures within CRs, the focus needs to be on creating a climate that increases the likelihood of change. There is an acknowledgement that some probationers 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 TCRs, this would infer 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 TF and vary in transparency depending upon a variety of factors, including the activation of power and ruptures within the CR. These lines have been added to the model in Figure 21 to illustrate their possible position. It is argued that if a line is "*crossed*" by either "*player*", a rupture is more likely to occur.

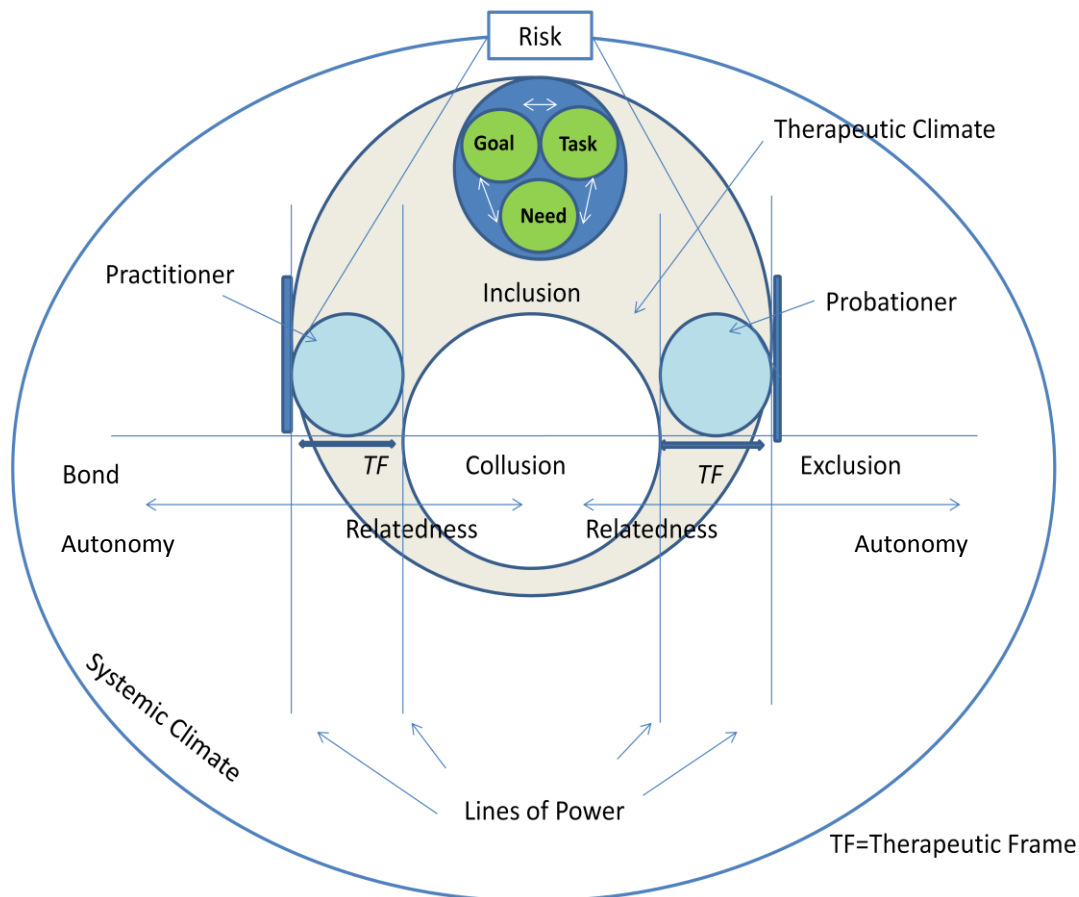


Fig. 21: A depiction of power at the boundaries of the TF.

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 probationers. This concurred with the notion that ruptures can “...burst through dramatically into awareness or emerge gradually and half consciously,” as described by Shadbolt (2012, p.11). Three sub-themes emerged with respect to power “games”; blocking, baiting and battling. Firstly, blocking seemed to occur as a response to a probationer “pushing buttons”. One practitioner 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 probationer was blocked through dismissive practice and the practitioner moves away (to become more autonomous), as their desire to relate diminishes. Another practitioner 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 conceptualised the prohibition of relatedness and sharing. One 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 probationer and withdrawal from the TCR was then outlined; *“I would rather not go there...they [the probationer] 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 a probationer was a way of coping with the perceived failure¹² of the probationer 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, forthcoming) that highlighted how belief in change can fade for a practitioner, over the course of their Probation career. These findings begin to reveal the reasons why this overall movement away from probationers may occur and signifies the importance of investing in relational work to preserve this important value within Probation practice. 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. However, it is argued by Newman and Nutley

¹² A *“failure,”* in this case, constituted as a further offence, a negative drug test or negative feedback from another service relating to the probationer’s behaviour.

(2003) that values inherent to Probation continue to thrive in practice and Weaver (2012, p.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.

Another power “game” that was described involved the baiting of probationers; one practitioner stated; *“I can make fun of you [a probationer] because I am enforcing these rules.”* Within a different focus group, one practitioner said; *“I have had people that have been so rubbish and so de-motivated that I have tried to make their appointment an awkward time...”* One practitioner tried 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 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” of theory seemed to emerge in both focus groups and in some ways created permissions to activate a breach or challenge within a given moment. Whilst

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 “*over stepped the mark.*” This led to practitioners expressing feelings of guilt and shame (internal markers), that were left unexplored by the practitioner after the event. 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 probationer failure. In these instances, it is argued that, similar to Hacking’s work (1985) they had “*made up*” an individual that needed actualisation. 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? Such tensions provide a plethora of further research endeavours that could investigate the processes that underlie identity transformation and the role of relational “*players*” over time.

With regard to power, it would appear that the practitioner’s belief in change was important in how power was presented within CRs. Both “*players*” confirmed how there were subtle ways in which this was made clear. Whilst one practitioner configured 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, a probationer 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 probationers, the feelings of exclusion were present in these instances and there was little opportunity to relate 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 probationer. Therefore, it is not only the probationer that needs engaging, but the practitioner also. A distant practitioner may influence probationers negatively and result in the “*backing away*” (Clark, 2005) of probationers that could explain one route to non-compliance. The framework of SEEDS provides some scope to address this, though greater investment in opportunities for deeper reflection is suggested.

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*.” One 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.”

A probationer 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 probationer’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 a probationer’s capacity to change. One practitioner stated; “*I want you (the probationer) to see...I need you to see how difficult you are.*” A colleague questioned this statement and asked: “*Is that about **you** wanting to win or is it, you didn’t want **him** to win?*” The practitioner replied, after a moment’s pause; “*I don’t want **them** to win.*” Comparatively, a probationer shared with me his first meeting with a practitioner, making references to this “*battle,*” including aspects of blocking (as indicated in bold):

“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, probationers talked about ways in which they tried to claw back some autonomy from these situations. The probationer within the above caption described how he felt so uncomfortable, that he asked his mother to attend the next

Probation appointment. Another probationer discussed how he organised his solicitor to advocate on his behalf, with a dispute relating to his PO. 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 CR. 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 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 Probation work, in order to build a greater understanding of how ruptures operate and the extent of their influence. Whilst 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 "*dual-relationships*" (Skeem et al, 2007).

4. The Management of Ruptures

Figure 22 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 returning to the relevant literature.

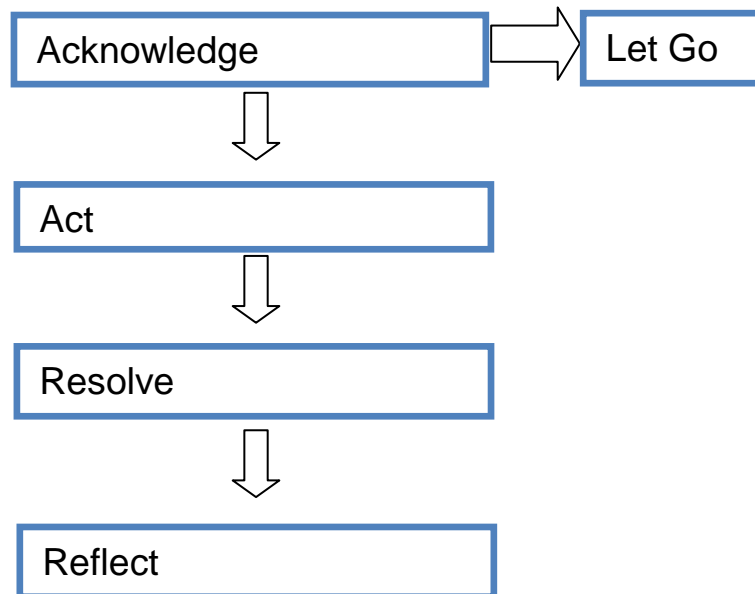


Fig. 22: The principles of rupture management.

From the data, there appeared to be numerous ways in which a practitioner could increase their awareness of ruptures. Firstly, 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*", "*disengagement*", "*confusion*" and "*disinterest*" could all be probationer 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 probationer's world, as they alter the information flow between themselves and the practitioner. This has several

implications for risk assessment during a rupture period. One 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. Through the focus group discussions, it seemed evident that markers were not necessarily just visible markers from the probationer, 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. She stated that feelings of discomfort need attention and a process of self-disclosure may be appropriate (Shadbolt, 2012, Safran et al, 2011, Safran and Muran, 2003). 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, p.144). It is argued that whilst 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. Whilst Probation has recently recognised the importance of reflection within supervisory settings, the attention to the finer details of relationships, are lacking. 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, a probationer 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.”

Whilst motivation is an important ingredient to facilitate effective rupture resolution, the opportunities to explore ruptures are also required. During my dissemination session with the Programmes team, a senior manager acknowledged that within a Programmes context, time is dedicated to video monitoring, collaborative working and supervisory feedback relating to relational issues. Whilst these discussions inferred that rupture work could occur within a Probation 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 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. One 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.”

Probationers discussed how they would welcome an acknowledgement of a relational problem from their practitioner. One probationer 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 probationer. Further to this, it is argued that power should not be made more visible by the practitioner (i.e. with enforcement or threats of enforcement), as a practitioner grapples with 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 CRs 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. It is therefore suggested that rupture training would occur incrementally with deeper retrospective reflection integrated within the framework of SEEDS. 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 a probationer;

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

Probationer: "No nothing at all, she killed it, murdered it."

Therefore, it is important that the practitioner makes the decision to "let go", for the benefit of both "players" 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. 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 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, due to the sensitivities around this issue.

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, p.208) refers to Tavuchi (1991):

"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, one probationer 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. Firstly, the ability to talk about relational problems may be very alien to both “players” and requires communicative skills. To illustrate, one probationer stated:

Probationer: “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.”

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

Probationer: “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 probationer’s past and present self, with the words; *“I ain’t that person anymore”*. It also suggested that to some extent, the probationer (and practitioner even) needs particular communicative resources and opportunities to participate fully in such difficult discussions. How these discussions are initiated with probationers that may

not have such resources is indeed a challenge, though through support and development it is optimistically argued that this is possible.

Another probationer highlighted the notion that relational discussions may be easier with certain POs:

Researcher: "How easy is it for you to talk about a negative relationship that you are having with a PO?"

Probationer: "It all depends on how you get on with a PO, if I don't think that the PO 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 inferred 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 TCR 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. In relation to this, a final example from a probationer highlighted the aspect of fear, suggesting:

“You got to fear the PO, 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 a probationer 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 CJS. In order for ruptures and their resolution to be fully integrated within Probation 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 probationers and the

emergent guilt that followed such confessions. During that experience, it felt as if a rupture was occurring within that very room; it 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.”

*“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.” (emphasis in bold)*

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*” (probationer).

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. Probationers who had negative experiences of CRs, felt strongly about this. One probationer 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 probationer stated the importance of talking about CRs, 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 probationers “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 probationer 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, probationers suggested that a ex-offender could be an appropriate individual, due to the perceived notion that a mentor may understanding the importance of TCRs and hold greater legitimacy compared with the traditional “expert” (Brown and Ross, 2010). With a current drive by the coalition government to integrate mentoring opportunities within the CJS, 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.

Probationers also discussed how a more inclusive approach could avoid possible ruptures, one probationer 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”*. With respect to other possible ruptures, I asked how practitioners could effectively deal with events of disclosure, which could put the relationship at risk. One probationer 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 TCR were observed here and in the data, 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 ruptures. Questioning the way in which breach may be a more inclusive process, in order to create a learning opportunity for the probationer that is meaningful, is contingent upon a TCR. 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 probationers refused to accept the conditions that were required of them, as they acknowledged that enforcement was “*part of the job*”. To illustrate, a probationer 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, probationers discussed *the way* in which ruptures could be avoided, giving probationers a “*place*” to share their concerns and discuss their problems. Whilst within 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 TCR and lead to opportunities for growth.

A probationer 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, one probationer 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 to 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 in 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 probationer could move closer to the practitioner, due to the desire to relate once more. A probationer 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 a probationer:

"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 CRs altogether. In contrast, once a period of relational sharing and collaboration has occurred, a period of resolution can be addressed. This period involved a discussion around what had been learnt from the rupture and how the relationship could move forward. This was

also seen as an opportunity to re-align boundaries and redress issues of power. One 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 bi-directional, as the probationer viewed the liberation of their “voice” as a way in which the practitioner could learn. One probationer 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 probationers can contribute to service development and improvements. With respect to the current drive towards payment-by-results (MofJ, 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 probationer drew comparisons between his experiences of rupture resolution within a counselling context and then a Probation context:

Probationer: “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.""

Researcher: "And how did she respond to that?"

Probationer: "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."

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

Probationer: "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. The probationer described how a male supervisor had "*rucked*" and berated her, regarding her attendance to a session, smelling of alcohol:

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

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

Researcher: "And how was that? Getting an apology from him?"

Probationer: "I felt better....yeah, I was down there and then I was up (points to line on visual)..."

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

Probationer: "Yeah."

Researcher: "In what way?"

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

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

Probationer: "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, 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 these processes. The final chapter will summarise the key findings from this project and consider how these findings can be integrated into practice.

8. CONCLUSION

This project embraced a participatory approach to examine the conceptualisation and de-construction of TCRs within Probation. The research illustrated that TCRs are multi-dimensional, complex and fluid and through their examination, the Dynamic Model of TCRs was collaboratively constructed (see Fig. 23).

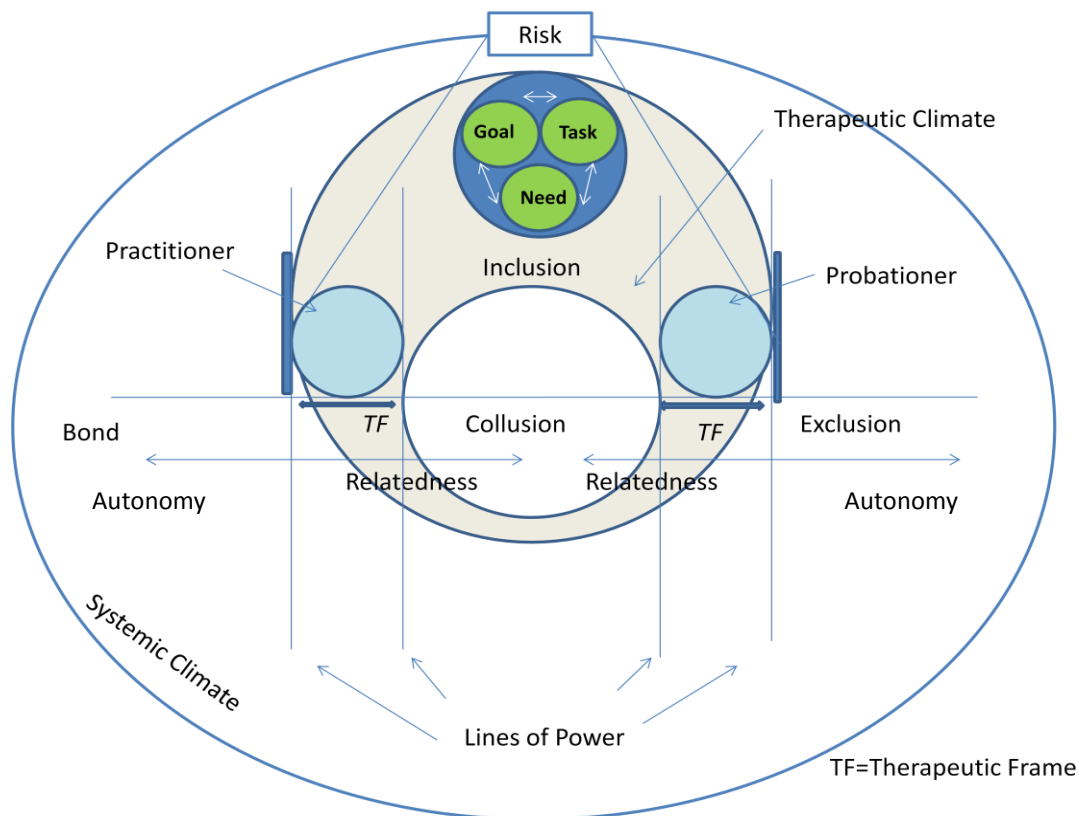


Fig. 23: The Dynamic Model of TCRs.

The model proposed just one way in which TCRs can be configured; through the exploration of its mechanisms and this is deemed to be the most significant contribution of this thesis. Each element of the model will be discussed to summarise the key findings relating to TCR conceptualisation.

1. *The relational “players” and the relatedness-autonomy continuum*

The practitioner and probationer are “*players*” within the CR, whose characteristics, styles, skills and relational schemata impact upon the formation of a TCR. Levels of motivation and receptivity of both “*players*” were considered important in TCR formation. These “*players*” were found to move together in order to relate and move apart, to exert autonomy. In view of the findings, it was argued that “*players*” move back and forth along two relatedness-autonomy continuums, as a response to interaction and “*bond*”.

2. *Bordin’s Triad and “Need”*

Bordin’s Triad featured in TCRs, though it was found that “*bond*” varied in depth and moved with respect to levels of relatedness and agreement of “*goal*,” “*task*” and “*need*.” The influence of these components on the TCR varied over time, throughout the relational narrative. From narrative exploration, it was inferred that the agreement of “*goal*,” “*task*” and “*need*” were particularly important at the beginning of the TCR, to assist in its formation.

3. *Systemic/ Probation Climate*

Whilst the source of power was perceived to be rooted in the practitioner, TCRs are embedded within a systemic climate that influences the practitioner, their role and behaviour. Power was found to vary in visibility, depending upon the events that were occurring within the TCR/CR. It was found that power was represented to the probationer in different ways, both positively and negatively and this impacted upon the movement of the “*players*” and likelihood of ruptures.

4. *Therapeutic Climate*

This was identified as a “*space*” that was congruent to a therapeutic environment, featuring; respect, acceptance, belief, support, trust and legitimacy. The findings relating to ruptures inferred that both “*players*” can move in and out of this climate, depending upon relational experiences. With respect to relational narratives, it was recognised that if practitioners position themselves within a therapeutic climate, this will increase receptivity and encourage the probationer to move into the therapeutic climate also.

5. *Therapeutic Frame*

The findings indicated that CRs can operate in “*spaces*” where a therapeutic climate is absent. Feelings of exclusion and collusion were referred to with respect to these “*spaces*.” The TF was established to represent an inclusive space, which possessed two boundaries that were “*crossed*” in moments of exclusion and collusion, and the over-use or under-use of power respectively.

6. *The “ideal” position*

Whilst the ideal position was attributed within the TF, it was recognised that due to ruptures, either “*player*” will inevitably move out of the TF, at different moments during the relational narrative.

7. *Lines of Power*

These are positioned at the boundaries of the TF and when such lines are “*crossed*” (by either “*player*”) could contribute to the occurrence of a rupture.

This model was constructed alongside probationers and practitioners to accurately depict a way in which TCRs can be conceptualised, which is practical and useful within practice. In response to the problems associated with relationships in Probation, this model begins to substantially address these problems and acknowledges power differentials between “*the players*” and how these influence TCR/CRs.

Having re-traced the relationship over time, relationships have shifted and re-configured in order to serve the functions of Probation. Within contemporary penal practice, contradictions between care and control exist both on a broad level and within relationships. In light of these findings, I argue that the dual function of Probation can be fulfilled through the utilisation of TCRs. It could be postulated that building a relationship to facilitate change is nigh on impossible due to such tensions. Indeed, Matthew and Hubbard (2007) argued that the lack of organisational focus on TCRs impedes the practitioner’s capacity to develop them. And yet, these findings have confirmed that TCRs exist within practice in spite of retributive pressures and have the potential to support the processes of desistance and contribute towards rehabilitation. This does not mean that issues around public protection are pushed to one side but instead, I argue that assessing risk can be partially fulfilled through TCRs, by encouraging probationers to share an accurate picture of their own lives.

The findings relating to relational narratives highlighted the fluidity of relationships and how practitioners can become more informed with respect to their relational journeys. In the past the caseworker was criticised for a lack of structure to their work and a variance in quality, whilst the case manager was deemed too standardised and not sufficiently responsive to diversity. Through a re-configuration

of TCRs with the introduction of therapeutic variables that influence rehabilitative goals, an individualised yet structured approach is recommended. This is not to say that relationships should be standardised, but instead, that they should be co-constructed through a set of principles. It is acknowledged that more research is required to confirm and elaborate upon these principles prior to their implementation, but this thesis has begun to address this exploration.

Whilst this thesis contributes to frontline practice, it is also important to step back and consider what is occurring on a broader level. With the establishment of CRC's within this current climate, ideas of collaboration are losing their visibility, due to a more centralised drive towards promoting competitive markets. Weaver (2012) argued that a narrow focus on reducing re-offending will constrain the developments of innovation and create forced, competitive alliances. I argue that this position could significantly impact upon the success of such initiatives, making them unsustainable and unproductive. Some Probation practitioners will be required to work as new representatives for CRC's, as Probation is broken down and practitioners are dispersed (MofJ, 2013). Whilst 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. Through a re-imagining of TCRs and their place within the CJS, services can begin to explore the benefits of such alliances at all levels of the system, including their specific contribution to supporting the process of desistance and addressing recidivism.

A further objective of this thesis was to explore how ruptures operate within CRs. The findings suggested that perceived duplicity and the visibility of power contributed

to the likelihood of rupture occurrence, as well as power “*games*” that were played by both “*players*.” 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 was of great significance in addressing ruptures and avoiding them within Probation practice. The consequences of ruptures may have implications with respect to practitioner legitimacy and inclusionary or exclusionary practice. Further work is needed within this area in order to confirm these findings and explore the notion of ruptures in greater detail. This project consisted of a relatively small sample and whilst it has initiated debate, additional efforts are welcomed.

It should also be noted that relationships *alone* cannot address offending behaviour, as intrinsic motivation and social capital are also important (Farrall, 2002). 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 dependent on the subjective meaning that is attached to them, the level of investment in them 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 TCRs, which contribute to behavioural change. Whilst the “*othering*” of probationers has been acknowledged within penal discourse, it is suggested that several *commonalities* exist between practitioners and probationers; both may lack receptivity to a TCR and use unhealthy means to exert their own agency. However, practitioners have greater opportunities to exert agency, as a representative of State power. The following recommendations are presented to encourage the “*playing*” of

a new relational “*game*”, a “*game*” that; embraces creativity and theory-building; returns to the individual in spite of the political drive towards the New Penology and; promotes humanistic relationships. 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 these recommendations provide greater clarity on the ways in which this research can be practically applied to Probation practice.

Recommendations

1. Prepare for a TCR

Time needs to be dedicated by the practitioner (and system), to prepare for TCRs. Both “*players*” appeared to experience some negative emotions prior to relationship commencement that if not addressed early may influence the likelihood of TCR formation. Preparing for a TCR will maximise the eventuality that a probationer deems the practitioner as legitimate and may encourage the probationer to move into the TF. There is a tendency within Probation 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 relating to target attainment. However, it would seem reasonable now to consider the development in practice whereupon time is dedicated at the early stages of a CR to develop a good understanding of the probationer and secure a TCR, prior to any form of intervention commencing.

2. Set clear boundaries and clarify role

The establishment of clear boundaries and clarification of role was a prominent finding. The separation of 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 role, during the relational narrative, is advised.

3. Promoting an engaged practitioner.

This can be achieved through alterations to the recruitment process that embrace the “*offender voice*” and invite offenders to partake in the interviewing of future staff. Through this process, it is argued that receptivity may be evaluated 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 future practitioners are receptive to the ideas and values behind such practices. Once employed, it is recommended that practitioners have opportunities to discuss relational experiences in a safe environment. Training and relationship champions may support these processes, as CPD 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. It is argued that these should complement and be integrated *with* CPD opportunities to avoid duplication and promote cohesive, integrated training.

The practical use of the Dynamic Model of TCRs as a tool for communication is suggested, with respect to practitioner position. If practitioners regularly reflect upon their position and how it differs with different probationers, this may develop skills that can assist in fulfilling this goal. Within this “*rule*,” the focus is not on engaging the probationer, but engaging the practitioner. It is recommended that engagement initiatives are embraced and reflective practice remains central to Probation work, through a mindful approach. Hick (2008) proposed that through a more mindful approach, deeper listening and awareness can occur and a development of relational knowledge can be achieved. In view of recent dissemination opportunities, it is argued that practitioners would be receptive to this approach and be interested in relational developments, in light of some welfare-based values which still operate within front-line work.

4. Encourage the probationer to move into the TF.

This will involve individual theory-building and the utilisation of knowledge relating to the relational narrative. Through the use of peer-learning opportunities, practitioners can discuss ways in which a probationer may be encouraged (or de-anchored) through the use of “*hooks*.”

5. Acknowledge and Resolve Ruptures

This recommendation is based on the findings relating to rupture identification and resolution. The Dynamic Model of TCRs may support practitioners in identifying how a probationer has moved in response to the rupture, the internal and external markers that have emerged and the way in which the rupture can be repaired. Through additional research, mindfulness and relational training, and CPD

opportunities, it is hoped that additional guidance can be provided for practitioners that will support these processes.

6. *Once in the TF, “push” the probationer as well as “pull”.*

Whilst it is argued that the “*ideal*” position for both “*players*” is within the TF, it is not recommended that once there, the “*game*” is over. At this point in the relational narrative, it is proposed that probationers 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 probationer may move too close or withdraw), but these movements hold great significance with respect to growth.

7. *Promote an empowering end.*

An empowering end requires the practitioner to genuinely highlight the achievements of the probationer, instil hope in change and acknowledge progress. It is also a time where the practitioner can reflect with the probationer, on their relationship. The time to undertake such a task may vary depending upon the probationer, though it is argued that this will prepare them for the ultimate rupture.

In the same way that this research aimed to address the marginalisation of offenders, through its methodology, I argue that a similar approach needs to occur within Probation practice. As with any revolution, it is invariably those that are oppressed, who will rise up. Within contemporary penal practice and the silencing of “*the other*,” offenders require advocacy in the same way that advocacy is central within deep TCRs. At the end of one probationer 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 probationer was placed as “*expert*” and that some probationers *want* to be heard, but do not have the means to project their voice. Ultimately, offenders hold the key to the relational revolution and whilst the role of the practitioner is unappreciated within practice, the role of the offender is largely ignored. To promote generativity 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. I urge both the National Probation Service and CRC’s to consider how an “*insiders*” perspective can benefit service delivery through the co-construction of future practice and I intend to actively promote such an approach in the future.

In order for a new “*game*” to be played, senior management need to support practitioners and 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 climate of power and control. The data found that in spite of this, TCRs are achievable and can exist within this challenging context, though further development of these ideas are needed. Whilst the current government propose that professionals are trusted to achieve positive results (MofJ. 2013), constraints exist that may in fact disqualify Probation from this political “*game*”. The future of Probation holds great uncertainty and change, as well as opportunity for development. A re-imagining of relational rehabilitation will ensure that future practice adds greater value, upholds the welfaristic values that are characteristic to Probation and supports legitimate and sustainable practice, which encourages positive change. As I have shared my research, both nationally and internationally,

practitioners immediately related to the findings, applying it to their own relationships through the adoption of new relational discourse. It is therefore argued that these findings will contribute to practice development, by considering relational work through an evidence based lens. Co-constructing the future with probationers will continue to promote the “*offender voice*,” affording probationers the opportunity to give back and propel a “*relational revolution*” (Weaver, 2011; 2012). The relational “*game*” between probationer and practitioner is difficult to “*win*,” easy to “*lose*,” but well worth playing as Morin (2006, p.11) states that; “*all the great transformation processes started with deviations.*” With this in mind, relationship work needs to be re-configured once more to promote change in the future, through the playing of a new “*game*.”

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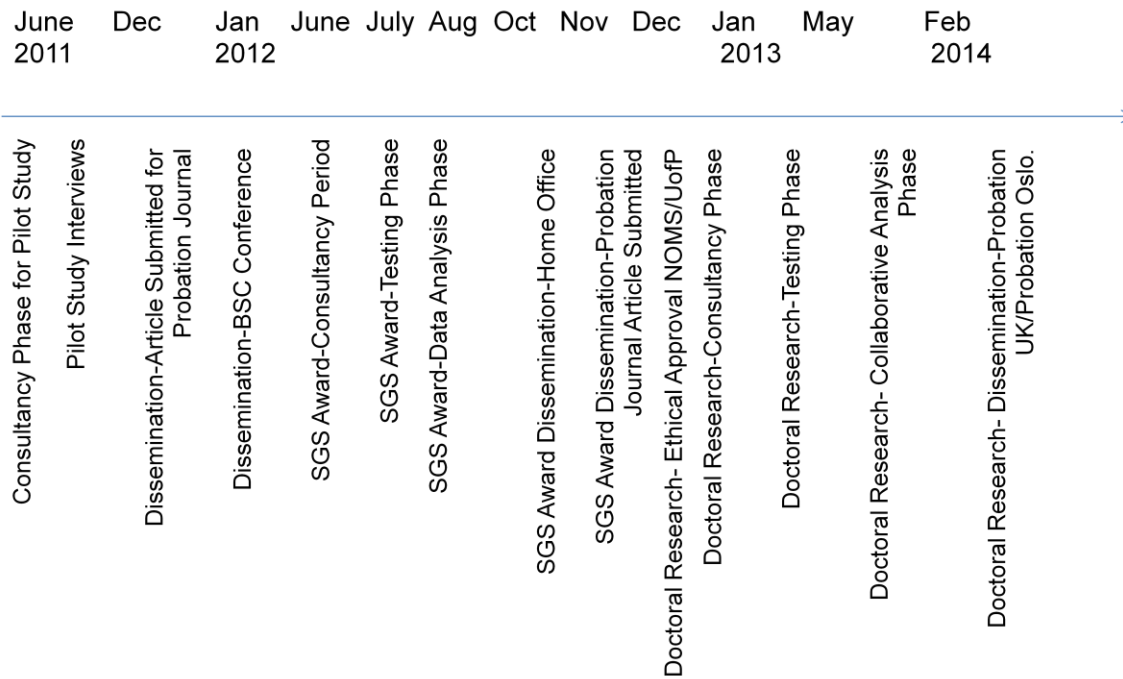
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: A Timeline of Research Activity



Appendix B: Consent Forms (Probationer and Practitioner respectively)



Research Title: A Conceptualisation and Deconstruction of the Therapeutic Correctional Relationship between Probation Practitioner and Probationer, using a participatory approach.

REC Ref No: 12/13:01

Mike Nash
Institute of Criminal Justice
St. George's Building, 141 High St,
Portsmouth. Mike.Nash@port.ac.uk

Name of Researcher:Sarah Lewis.....

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up until the point of data analysis.

3. I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the NOMS/University of Portsmouth and analysed by probationers and practitioner. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.

4. I agree to the interview being recorded.

5. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant:.....

Date:.....

Signature:.....

Name of Person taking consent:.....

Date:.....

Signature:.....

(When completed: 1 for participant; 1 for researchers file)



Research Title: A Conceptualisation and Deconstruction of the Therapeutic Correctional Relationship between Probation Practitioner and Probationer, using a participatory approach.

REC Ref No: **12/13:01**

Mike Nash
Institute of Criminal Justice
St.George’s Building, 141 High St,
Portsmouth.
Mike.Nash@port.ac.uk

Name of Researcher:Sarah Lewis.....

Please initial box

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw up until the point at which the focus group begins.

I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the NOMS/University of Portsmouth and analysed by probationers and practitioner. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.

I agree to the interview being recorded.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant:..... Date:.....

Signature:.....

Name of Person taking consent:..... Date:.....

Signature:.....

(When completed: 1 for participant; 1 for researchers file)



Information Sheet

Date: 02/05/2013

A Conceptualisation and Deconstruction of the Therapeutic Correctional Relationship between Probation Practitioner and Probationer, using a participatory approach.

Mike Nash

Institute of Criminal Justice,
St. George's Building, 141 High
St, Portsmouth.

Mike.Nash@port.ac.uk

REC Ref No: 12/13:01

You are invited to participate in a study that is being conducted by Sarah Lewis who is carrying out her doctoral studies at the University of Portsmouth.

What is the research about?

This research hopes to explore the stages of a working relationship between Probation staff and Probationer and consider those factors relating to the practitioner that promote and inhibit a working relationship from developing, sustaining and ending effectively.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to attend a one-hour interview at IB Road in Portsmouth Probation Office. During the interview you will be asked to discuss the relationships you have had with Probation staff and how they developed. You will be asked to draw upon your experiences and knowledge as a Probationer and asked to take part in the analysis of this data.

What are the benefits and costs of taking part in this research?

It is hoped that the interview will be an enjoyable experience where you will have the opportunity to discuss your views and experiences. However, it is appreciated that you are busy and participating in this research will require commitment and time from yourself. Also, there is a possibility that you will draw upon some experiences that you have had with Probation staff that have been challenging. It should be noted here that there is no pressure to discuss cases that you are not comfortable discussing as your well-being is paramount during the research.

What if you want to withdraw from the study?

If for whatever reason you wish to withdraw from the research, you are free to do so up until the point of analysis. If a participant does not wish to attend the interview last minute, this will be respected and if this occurs, you will be reassured that this will not have any negative consequences. If you do not wish to participate in the research, this will also be accepted and there is no pressure to take part.

What will happen to the information you share?

Any information from this study will remain confidential and this will be discussed at the start of the interview. There will also be a discussion around the limits of confidentiality in the event that information is disclosed that could infer that there is intended (or past) harm to others and this will be passed onto your Offender Manager. The interview and focus group will be recorded so that they can be transcribed and these will only be used for this research and not for any other purpose. Recordings from the interview will be kept securely and your identity and role will remain anonymous when the data is reported within my thesis or in a publication.

From this research, I hope to submit an article for publication to share the findings with Probation staff and academics. You will be sent a copy of this article prior to publication and be given the opportunities to comment on the article before submission. The data will be analysed by the researcher, practitioners and probationers, but your anonymity will be retained throughout this process.

Who is funding and organising the research?

The Institute of Criminal Justice is funding this study and I take full responsibility for its organisation.

Who has reviewed this study?

Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Portsmouth, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science.

If you wish to participate please sign the informed consent form and return it to me. If you wish to contact me for more information around the research please do not hesitate on sarah.lewis@port.ac.uk or 02392845388.

Many thanks, Sarah Lewis

Information Sheet



Date: 07/01/2013

A Conceptualisation and Deconstruction of the Therapeutic Correctional Relationship between Probation Practitioner and Probationer, using a participatory approach.

Mike Nash

Institute of Criminal Justice.
St. George's Building, 141 High
St, Portsmouth.

Mike.Nash@port.ac.uk

REC Ref No: 12/13:01

You are invited to participate in a study that is being conducted by Sarah Lewis who is carrying out her doctoral studies at the University of Portsmouth.

What is the research about?

This research hopes to explore the stages of a working relationship between Probation staff and Probationer and consider those factors relating to the practitioner that promote and inhibit a working relationship from developing, sustaining and ending effectively. It will also investigate events that can threaten a working relationship and explore ways in which the relationship can be recovered by practitioners.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to attend two focus groups at IB Road in Portsmouth Probation Office. During the first focus groups you will be asked to explore the stages of a working relationship and in the second focus group you will be asked to identify events that could threaten the working relationship and how you can support relationship recovery at these times. For both focus groups you will be asked to draw upon your experiences and knowledge as a practitioner and take part in an active discussion and may be asked to contribute to the process of data analysis.

What are the benefits and costs of taking part in this research?

It is hoped that the focus groups will be an enjoyable and meaningful experience where you will have the opportunity to discuss your views and experiences of working practice and inform your practice and that of others. However, it is appreciated that you are busy and participating in this research will require commitment and time from yourself. Also, there is a possibility that you will draw upon some experiences that you have had with Probationers that have been challenging and resulted in stress. It should be noted here that there is no pressure to discuss cases that you are not comfortable discussing as your well-being is paramount during the research.

What if you want to withdraw from the study?

If for whatever reason you wish to withdraw from the research, you are free to do so up until the point of the start of the focus group. If a participant does not wish to attend the focus group last

minute, this will be respected and if this occurs, you will be reassured that this will not have any negative consequences. If you do not wish to participate in the research, this will also be accepted and there is no pressure to take part in the focus groups. At the start of the focus group, group consent to participate will be structured into the interview and prior to this the group will be informed that once the focus group starts, their data will not be able to be removed from the analysis. A further opportunity to leave the focus group will be made if anyone is not happy with this arrangement.

What will happen to the information you share?

Any information from this study will remain confidential and this will be discussed at the start of each focus group. There will also be a discussion around the limits of confidentiality in the event that information is disclosed that could infer that there is intended (or past) harm to others or the participant themselves and this will be passed onto the participants' line manager. The focus groups will be recorded so that they can be transcribed and these will only be used for this research and not for any other purpose. Recordings from the interview will be kept securely and your identity and role will remain anonymous when the data is reported within my thesis or in a publication.

The information gathered for my doctoral studies will be collated and I hope to submit an article for publication to disseminate the findings to other practitioners and researchers. You will be sent a copy of this article prior to publication and be given the opportunities to comment on the article before submission. The data will be analysed by the researcher, practitioners and probationers, but your anonymity will be retained throughout this process.

Who is funding and organising the research?

I am self-funding this study and take full responsibility for its organisation.

Who has reviewed this study?

Research in the University of Portsmouth is looked at by an independent group of people called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the University of Portsmouth, Faculty of Humanities and Social Science.

If you wish to participate please sign the informed consent form and return it to me. If you wish to contact me for more information around the research please do not hesitate on sarah.lewis@port.ac.uk or 07841577920.

Many thanks,

Sarah Lewis

Appendix D: Evidence of Favourable Ethical Opinion



Sarah Lewis
Professional Doctorate Candidate
Institute of Criminal Justice Studies
University of Portsmouth

REC reference number: 12/13:01
Please quote this number on all correspondence.

14th November 2012

Dear Sarah,

Full Title of Study: The relational journey: What matters and how can the relationship be safeguarded in practice.

Documents reviewed:
Emails to senior management and practitioners
Information sheets for practitioners and service users
Consent forms for practitioners and service users
Interview schedules
Signed agreements

Further to our recent correspondence, this proposal was reviewed by The Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

I am pleased to tell you that the proposal was awarded a favourable ethical opinion by the committee.

I wish you every success with the study.

Kind regards,

FHSS FREC Chair
David Carpenter

Appendix E: Research Ethics Review Checklist



FORM UPR16
Research Ethics Review Checklist

Please complete and return the form to Research Section, Quality Management Division, Academic Registry, University House, with your thesis, prior to examination


Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information		Student ID:	X00024801X
Candidate Name:	Sarah Lewis		
Department:	ICJS	First Supervisor:	Professor Mike Nash
Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students)	Sept 2010		
Study Mode and Route:	Part-time	Prof Doc (PD)	
Title of Thesis:	Playing the Game: A Conceptualisation and Deconstruction of the Therapeutic Correctional Relationship between Probation Practitioner and Probationer, using a participatory approach.		
Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data)	49625		

If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

UKRIO Finished Research Checklist: (If you would like to know more about the checklist, please see your Faculty or Departmental Ethics Committee rep or see the online version of the full checklist at: http://www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/code-of-practice-for-research/)	
a) Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?	YES
b) Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?	YES
c) Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?	YES
d) Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?	YES
e) Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?	YES

*Delete as appropriate

Candidate Statement:	
I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)	
Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):	12/13:01
Signed: <i>(Student)</i> 	Date: 25.03.2013
If you have <i>not</i> submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered 'No' to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain why this is so:	
Signed: <i>(Student)</i>	Date: