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Factors that Contribute to Success of Probationers:

Probation Officers' Point of View

By

Brittany Archambeau

A Thesis Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

in

Criminal Justice

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Factors that Contribute to Success of Probationers:

The Probation Officers' Point of View

By

Brittany Archambeau

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Brittany Archambeau

November 11, 2011

Abstract

With such large numbers of individuals requiring supervision in the United States, it is essential to understand what contributes to the success of probationers. Probation officers work closest with probationers and develop a unique understanding of what contributes to a probationer's success. The framework for this research is rooted in the idea that the officers experience conflicting goals of rehabilitation and law enforcement. Extensive interviews were conducted with probation officers in Federal and local probation to assess their views on the goals of probation, needs of probationers, and best practices. Hypotheses tested involve the importance of evidence-based practices, cognitive-behavioral therapies, and the use of risk and needs assessments. Findings indicate that officers downplay rehabilitation and successful practices in response to the conflicting goals that they face, such as ensuring public safety. In response to these findings, probation departments should focus on transferring what has been determined to contribute to success into everyday use of supervision.

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1. INTRODUCTION

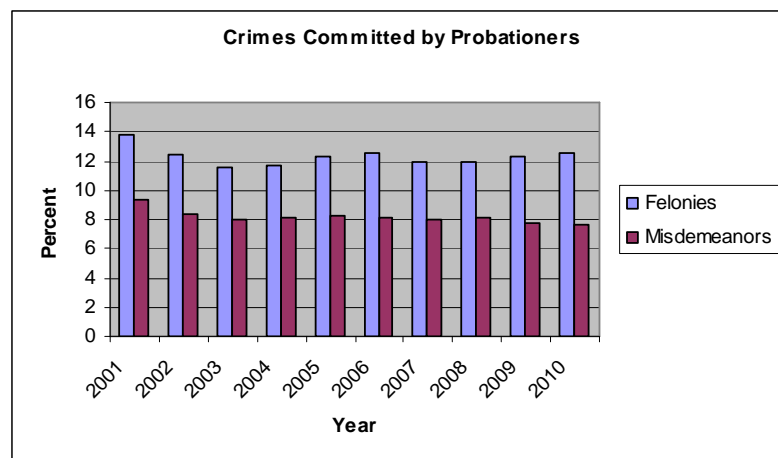
According to the Bureau of Justice, in 2009 there were 4,203,967 individuals on Probation in the United States. Probationers make up 84% of the community supervision population; with such large numbers of probationers it is essential to understand requirements to successfully complete this sentence. Probation officers' close proximity to probationers offers an important perspective regarding which programs and conditions lead to successful outcomes. Officers' experiences and beliefs of what contributes to success of probation are hypothesized to be consistent with empirical descriptions of the challenges to determine what contributes to success; these challenges are due to the numerous factors influencing success, including the obstacle of conflicting goals between rehabilitation and law enforcement.

Probation officers are expected to address a large range of supervisory problems. The needs of probationers include ways to address drug dependency, anti-social attitudes, and criminal associates, among others (Astbury, 2008). Further, many probationers are often undereducated and face challenges in obtaining employment. These common obstacles must be addressed in order for an individual to have a better chance at succeeding on probation as well as living as a law-abiding citizen.

Determining what contributes to an individual being successful on probation can be difficult because of the numerous definitions of "success". Because there are many different programs and conditions that can influence whether an individual is successful on probation, distinguishing those that lead to success is a complicated task. Most often, individuals are considered successful if they complete their term of probation without recidivating, but there are other measures of success.

Understanding which programs and features probation officers find lead to success of probation will provide knowledge to agencies regarding the “street level” view of program efficacy. This could help agencies increase the implementation of programs that have been determined to lead to the greatest chances of success, therefore increasing the number of individuals who successfully complete probation. Individuals on probation committed 12.5% of felonies and 7.6% of misdemeanors in Monroe County in 2010 (Division of Criminal Justice Services, 2011). As shown in figure one, the percentage of crimes committed by probationers have remained steady since 2001. These significant figures reflect the importance of implementing successful probation programs to decrease the amount of recurring offenses.

Figure 1: Crimes Committed by Probationers between 2001 & 2010



The outlook and beliefs of probation officers in regards to what contributes to success of probation is important because these officers represent a substantial investment in the social control of probationers. These officers enforce the conditions and establish policies at the street level that largely influence an individual’s term of supervision. Establishing which policies, programs, and conditions research has shown

to be most effective, and determining whether this is consistent with actual everyday enforcement of probation will develop an understanding of what contributes to the greatest chance of success for probationers.

The goal of the interviews was to determine whether what literature describes as leading to success is consistent with everyday, real-world use of probation. It was hypothesized that the officers' responses would be consistent with research, and that they would base their supervision on what has been shown to be successful. Determining what officers find as contributing to the greatest chances of success was explored by asking questions concerning the different programs and treatments offered, as well as what factors the officers found as contributing to success.

The second chapter of this paper will address literature and theory regarding effective probation programs. The importance of the use of evidence-based practices will be emphasized, which focuses on transferring what research has shown as successful into everyday use of probation. Cognitive-behavioral therapies will be discussed as well as the theory behind the programs and the importance of behavior modifying techniques in probation. Addressing the risks and needs of probationers will be described as an essential component in creating case plans as well as throughout the supervision of individuals. The risk and needs assessment is conducted by pre-sentencing officers; therefore, the importance of the pre-sentence investigation and its influence on the entire term of probation will be addressed.

This chapter will also include a section explaining the "what works" research--more specifically, what has been found as leading to success of probation. Tools used to contribute to the success of probationers will also be discussed. A synopsis chart outlines

this research and the factors that contribute to success. This section is an essential part of the paper, as it creates background knowledge of what research has found as being successful and sets expectations for what the probation officers will consider as contributing to success.

The next section, chapter three, will discuss policies and theories that influence probation programs and treatments. First, the section will explain specific policies and statutes that establish guidelines for conditions of probation in both federal probation and New York State, which the county probation department must follow. Next, social control theory will be discussed which influence probation programs such as requiring an individual to obtain education or employment. Also included is the social learning theory which is the basis for cognitive-behavioral programs.

Research design and data collection will be described in chapter four. This section will discuss the interviews that were conducted and will describe information such as the participants and sampling, interview content and method, as well as the interview procedure and schedule. The specific questions asked will be explained in detail, which will allow for a comparison between research and the officers' everyday belief of what contributes to success of probation.

Next, the findings from the interviews will be discussed. The responses will be divided into sections concerning the goals of probation, and different programs and approaches that are used that officers find contribute to success. The results will be analyzed to reveal patterns in what the officers find as contributing to success. The numerous hypotheses and organizational differences noted will be addressed.

The last section will include a discussion and conclusion further analyzing the responses obtained from the interviews. A description of the findings will include the goal conflict between law enforcement and rehabilitation described in the literature. Hypotheses will be discussed and whether or not they were supported by the findings. Last, conclusions will be drawn regarding the goals of probation as well as the officers' everyday beliefs of what contributes to success.

2. LITERATURE AND THEORY REGARDING EFFECTIVE PROBATION PROGRAMS

2.1 Evidence-Based Practices

In recent years, probation agencies have turned to evidence-based practices to guide the types of programs available to probationers. Evidence-based practices focus on transferring research to the “real world” and bringing empirical knowledge into practice (Bourgon, Bonta, Rugge, Scott, & Yessine, 2010). More specifically, evidence-based practices require that probation officers consider research and what has previously been proven successful to determine which types of programs would be the most effective. The decisions that officers make should be based upon empirical evidence to attain the most desirable outcome from their intervention (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005).

Evidence-based principles that have shown to be most successful in probation programs include cognitive-behavioral therapies, which refer to a range of therapies that address behavior and thoughts through social learning-based interventions. Evidence-based practices also emphasize the principles of risk, need, and responsivity in effective intervention. The risk principle addresses the propensity that an individual will commit another crime; the needs principle address criminogenic characteristics (Bourgon et al., 2010). Responsivity includes identifying the most appropriate style of treatment for each individual (Braucht, 2009). It is beneficial for facilitators to be probation officers who have a real interest in assisting with positive change of the probationer (Braucht, 2009).

Along with focusing on “what works,” other aspects of evidence-based practices, such as the importance of program design, integrity of implementation, and evaluation have increased in importance. An example of a program guided by evidence-based

practice is the Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervisions (STICS) (Bourgon et al., 2010). Knowledge of the STICS program can aid in understanding how to transfer empirical knowledge into everyday supervision. This program includes specific actions and an implementation strategy that assist probation officers with incorporating cognitive-behavioral therapy programs as well as the risk, need, and responsivity principles into supervision (Bourgon et al., 2010).

Included in the implementation process is an initial three-day training for the probation officers, followed by repetition of skill maintenance through monthly meetings. Probation officers who participated were randomly selected from British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island. To evaluate the programs, officers focused on a select number of adult probationers that they supervised to determine whether the training was beneficial (Bourgon, et. al., 2010).

The STICS program emphasizes cognitive-behavior strategies that have recently been determined to be an essential element of probation programs. The program stresses that officers should focus not only on the cognitive behavior of probationers, but also on their own thoughts and actions that directly influence the individuals whom they are supervising. The program is rooted in the principles that behavior is learned, learning occurs through interactions of one's environment, and pro-criminal cognitions and attitudes are among the most important risk/need factors that should be addressed (Bourgon, et al., 2010).

The STICS program is a great example of implementing knowledge of “what works” into everyday use. Martinson’s 1974 publication of “nothing works” (as cited by Bourgon et al., 2010) had a large influence on all areas of corrections, including

community supervision (Bourgon et al., 2010). This publication encouraged researchers opposed to the view that “nothing works” in terms of rehabilitative treatment to focus on different programs to attempt to determine practices that do work; as a result, an emphasis was placed on program design, integrity of implementation, and evaluation of these programs (Bourgon et al., 2010). Evidence-based practices include principles such as developing clear goals and objectives for probationers, using classification systems to ensure individuals are receiving the proper services, relying on theoretical models to guide programs, and planning for relapse during treatment (Listwan, Cullen, & Latessa, 2006).

Another example of an evidence-based practice that has become widely used is motivational interviewing (MI), which enhances an individual’s communication skills and has been shown to be effective in addressing a wide range of issues, especially substance abuse. MI emphasizes increasing internal motivation to decrease criminal behaviors (Alexander & VanBenschoten, 2008). In order for new skills to be useful in decreasing criminal behavior, individuals must have the motivation to want to change and make improvements in their life.

Effective probation programs must establish necessary components for success of individuals on probation and should be used to guide the conditions that individuals must follow. Focusing on these approaches and implementing proven effective programs such as cognitive-behavioral therapies and risk-needs assessments should increase the likelihood of probationers’ success on supervision. Determining whether probation officers find these programs to contribute to success will reveal whether what research has shown to be effective corresponds with everyday use.

2.2 Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies

Cognitive-behavioral therapy programs are based on the idea that all actions result from thought patterns and values that originate early in life. Since thoughts determine behavior, if thoughts are changed then they will alter an individual's behaviors (MacGill, 2007). It has been shown that addressing an individual's cognitive behavior will produce a reinforcing effect that will continue beyond that individual's supervision (Hansen, 2008). Use of this therapy is therefore more effective than solely addressing the probationer's behavior; by addressing the individual's thought process the goal is to instill new coping skills and ways of handling stressful situations in a law-abiding and productive manner.

Cognitive-behavioral therapies focus on teaching individuals skills to transfer into their natural environment that will allow them to respond to stress in a socially accepted manner. If individuals are taught alternative ways of handling stressful situations that previously led to them to partake in criminal behaviors, they will have a greater chance of succeeding as law-abiding members of society (Hansen, 2008). These programs address styles of thinking and behaviors as well as antisocial attitudes (Shearer & King, 2004). Cognitive-behavioral programs include activities such as role playing, rewards and punishments, rehearsals and practice, and modeling. A part of many cognitive-behavioral therapies is homework; if individuals are willing to work outside of the class, it shows that they are willing to work towards improving their situation (Hansen, 2008).

Cognitive-behavioral therapies attempt to address dynamic risk factors or also referred also referred to as criminological needs used to predict recidivism of adult offenders. Characteristics include dynamic factors that change over time and therefore

should be addressed with subjectivity. These dynamic factors include antisocial values, thoughts, and behaviors; it is important that these dynamic factors are addressed. The principles of cognitive-behavior therapies maintain that such factors influence an individual's behavior and help determine whether or not an individual is likely to comply with society's laws and norms.

Static factors are indications of early family life as well as social adjustment risk factors and must also be assessed; these factors include aspects of the individual's past or personal characteristics such as gender, age, past criminal history, early family factors, and criminal associates (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996). Unlike dynamic factors, static factors tend to stay the same throughout one's lifetime, but are still important to take into consideration to develop a thorough understanding of the individual's present circumstance.

Reasoning and Rehabilitation (R&R) is an example of a cognitive-behavioral program that addresses these factors. The program includes about 35 sessions, in which adult probationers participate in games, group discussions, puzzles, audiovisual materials, reasoning exercises, modeling, and role playing. These sessions are intended to improve characteristics such as interpersonal problem solving, critical reasoning, self-control, cognitive style, and values. After completing the program, probationers will have been trained to realize the consequences of their behaviors and to think before they act. The program is aimed at increasing the pro-social thoughts and actions of those who participate (Hansen, 2008).

In 1996, a shorter version of R & R, known as R & R2, was developed, which addressed the shortcomings of its predecessor program and focused more closely on

individualized offender's needs. This program includes 1000 minutes of training and attempts to teach individuals how to transfer the cognitive-behavioral skills that they learn to everyday real-life occurrences. This program incorporates different principles such as motivational interviewing, pro-social modeling, relapse prevention, as well as desistance, which encourage individuals to continue living a socially accepted lifestyle (Hansen, 2008).

Cognitive-behavioral therapies attempt to teach individuals that they control their own behaviors. They also address anti-social thoughts and behaviors that lead to difficulty with correctly reading social cues, accepting blame for their actions, as well as using moral reasoning. Cognitive-behavioral therapies provide individuals with techniques to alter these negative thoughts, which transfer into anti-social behaviors (Hansen, 2008). These therapies emphasize that the risk, needs, and responsivity of each individual need to be addressed to determine which programs will be the most beneficial for rehabilitation (MacGill, 2007). Cognitive-behavioral therapies have been shown to be most effective because they address factors that will attain sustained change of individuals, not only during their term of probation but also throughout their life.

2.3 Risk and Needs Assessment

Understanding whether or not an individual is likely to commit a future crime, as well as what interventions should be taken to decrease this risk, is essential to effectively supervise an individual on probation (Alexander & VanBenschoten, 2008). The risk and need assessment is an essential component of supervision according to both evidence-based practices as well as cognitive-behavioral therapies. Addressing both the risk and

need of an individual is essential for correctional intervention. In the 1980s the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) recommended development of a risk and needs assessment tool to assess these factors (Taxman, 2002).

The risk factor holds that for programming to be effective it should match the risk level of the individual (Lowenkamp, Smith, & Latessa, 2006). The risk factor also determines who should be targeted, or which offenders should receive treatment based on who has the highest probability of recidivating. Risk factors also include special categories that might further define a probationer. These categories include substance abusing, domestic violence offenders, those with mental health issues, violent offenders, gang involved individuals, sex offenders, and disassociated offenders; all individuals falling under one or more of these categories will require specialized treatment (Taxman, Shepardson, & Byrnes, 2004).

Determining the risk level of an individual includes assessment of risk factors such as prior arrests, prior incarceration, age at the current arrest, history of failure in community correction programs, as well as history of drug use. Taking all of these characteristics into consideration allows officers to determine the level of risk of an individual they are supervising, which is then used to guide that individual's supervision plan (Taxman, 2002). When creating case plans, the goal of assessing risk is to reduce the individual's likelihood of committing further crimes while on probation. This is determined by different classification tools developed for probation agencies.

An example of a risk assessment tool is the Level of Service Inventory Revised (LSI-R). Adult probationers are interviewed by the probation officer and rated on 54 risk and need factors. These factors include characteristics of the individual such as "criminal

history, education/employment, financial situation, family/marital relationships, accommodations, leisure and recreation, companions, alcohol or drug use, emotional/mental health, and attitudes and orientations” (Flores, Lowenkamp, Smith, & Latessa, 2006, p. 45). After the interview, the probation officer often contacts family members or other close companions to verify the information that was given by the probationer. After entering all of the necessary information, a risk and need score is determined based on the responses; this score guides the supervision of the probationer (Flores et al., 2006).

It is essential that assessments address both dynamic and static factors to most efficiently categorize the individual and predict reoffending. As discussed earlier, static factors are characteristics of an individual that will not change, but these factors undeniably influence risk. Dynamic factors are essential to focus on when determining the classification of an individual because these factors influence the individual’s present-day situation. Both static and dynamic factors need to be taken into consideration to most effectively determine an individual’s risk level (Flores et al., 2006).

These risk and needs assessments attempt to ensure that programming is consistent with an offender’s risk. It has been shown that higher risk offenders should be targeted for treatment; these individuals are most likely to recidivate and will benefit the most from intensive treatment (Lowenkamp et al., 2006). According to the social control theory, the amount of social bonds an individual has influences whether or not the individual will participate in criminal behaviors; as the amount of social bonds increases, an individual has more to lose if caught violating a condition of probation. Consistent with this theory, when high-risk offenders receive intensive treatment, it may increase

their social bonds to conventional society and therefore increase their chances for long-term positive change (Mackenzie & Li, 2002).

The opposite is found for low-risk offenders; when low-risk probationers are placed into programs that are too intensive or are not consistent with their risk level, they have a greater chance of recidivating. This is because intensive programs may interrupt current positive social relationships such as family, employment, and school (Latessa, 2004). Determining the risk level of the individual and using this to guide decision making about supervision leads to improvements in probation outcomes (Alexander & VanBenschoten, 2008). Ensuring that probationers receive necessary treatment and participate in supervision programs that address any current issues they may be facing will increase the chances of their term of probation being successfully completed.

The second principle that is evaluated in regards to the probationer is the needs assessment. A needs assessment determines what should be targeted by treatment, and includes criminological factors associated with future criminal conduct. Among these characteristics are self-control, anti-social peer associations, lack of problem solving ability, substance abuse, and others (Latessa, 2004). Most offenders have numerous needs that have to be addressed, and it is essential to address all of them so they have a greater chance of succeeding.

Addressing criminogenic needs during supervision is directly related to whether the individual will be successful on probation. Six major criminogenic needs are identified that influence an individual's chance of committing future crime, and should be addressed when developing a successful case plan. These characteristics include low self-control, anti-social personality characteristics, anti-social values, criminal peers,

substance abuse, and having a dysfunctional family. Low self-control significantly increases the chances that an individual will commit a crime because of the inability to control impulses. Anti-social personality characteristics such as callousness can cause individuals not to care how their actions impact others, and therefore lead to the justification of criminal actions (Taxman et al., 2004).

Along with an anti-social personality, anti-social values are also linked to crime; when individuals reject conventional views of the community, they often develop thoughts and attitudes that lead to the belief that criminal or deviant actions are acceptable. Criminal peers significantly influence criminal acts because someone surrounded by individuals who are committing crimes will be more likely to also participate in criminal acts. Substance abuse, which is illegal in itself, also acts as a gateway to other crimes. Individuals often make poor decisions while abusing substances, or commit crimes in order to afford to buy more of the drug. Substance abuse treatment is often provided to probationers through community programs, and is enforced by the officers through drug testing (U.S. Probation & Pretrial Services, 2005). Lastly, a dysfunctional family is linked to crime because without positive role models to learn morals and values, individuals are often led to believe that criminal acts and substance abuse are acceptable (Taxman et al., 2004).

As mentioned earlier, addressing all of these anti-social thoughts and behaviors will significantly increase the chances that an individual is successful on supervision. Individuals who are on supervision often suffer from some form of mental illness, which include symptoms such as unrealistic thinking, inability to control impulses, impaired judgment, and violence to oneself or others. These symptoms influence an individual's

mood, memory, perception, disorganized thinking, and orientation, and may lead an individual to commit criminal acts. It is important that these symptoms are addressed to decrease the danger these individuals pose to themselves and others. Mental health treatments include individual, group, and family counseling, psychological/psychiatric evaluations, substance abuse testing, medication, as well as clinical consultations with the treatment facility and the probation officer. The risk and needs assessment is essential in determining whether an individual suffers from a mental disease and therefore should receive treatment (U.S. Probation & Pretrial Services, 2005).

Addressing criminogenic needs significantly impacts chances of committing future crimes and determines whether or not an individual will be successful on probation. These needs are therefore essential to take into consideration and should guide the development of case plans. Case plans are described as the backbone of an individual's supervision. Although case plans are based on the risk and needs assessment, there are many other principles that should be taken into consideration when a probation officer develops a case plan. The officer should consider the probationer's current situation as well as dynamic factors, and match these characteristics with appropriate services. The risk factors determine which type of controls should be implemented, such as contacts, curfews, and drug testing. Case plans should consist of clear goals and problem-solving techniques to address the factors that may increase the chances of an individual committing future crime (Taxman et al., 2004).

To address the risk and needs of the offender, assessments should focus on the offender's present circumstance, be action oriented, and teach the offender positive skills to replace unconventional or anti-social ones (Latessa, 2004). Responsivity has been

described as essential to ensure these factors are addressed; this includes matching the offender with proper incentives and treatments. Ensuring that offenders have the correct mix of treatment and services will increase their opportunity for success through achieving sustained change (Taxman et al., 2004).

Responsivity also includes the realization that an individual will go through stages of changes and will require different treatment throughout these stages. Another way to ensure change is to create a case plan that includes the goals and interests of the offender. For example, if individuals are interested in obtaining a certain job or spending time with their children, implementing services that will offer assistance with obtaining these goals will ensure that the individual remains motivated to change. It is also essential to assess an individual's cognition or ability to learn to ensure that goals set are not unrealistic in comparison with the individual's abilities (Taxman et al., 2004).

Staffing has a large influence on the success of individuals on probation. Officers should pay attention to offenders and their interests and capabilities to have enough information to ensure they are providing proper assistance. An officer should look into previous interventions that an individual has participated in, and determine whether or not they were effective prior to developing a case plan (Taxman et al., 2004). Ensuring that probationers are receiving the proper services that will address their specific problems will increase their chances for success.

Assessing these three factors of risk, need, and responsivity provides an essential tool for probation officers. These characteristics are used to guide case plans, which determine the level of contact that an individual will receive. Case plans also determine how to parcel out the limited amount of resources that probation officers have available

for probationers. An individual who is categorized as high risk will require a higher level of contact, and so should receive more resources due to being more likely to recidivate (Taxman, 2002).

Ensuring that probationers are provided the proper programs and treatments to address their specific needs will increase their chances of success. Every individual has a unique set of problems and needs that must be addressed to have a chance at being successful on probation. Identifying these problems and providing programs to address these specific needs is an important role of probation officers; risk and need assessment tools are therefore valuable in assisting officers in completing this essential task.

2.4 Pre-sentencing

These risk and needs assessments are conducted by pre-sentencing officers during the pre-sentence investigation, and largely influence every aspect of an individual's supervision. The pre-sentencing investigation and report are widely relied on by the judge as well as probation officers, and also plays a large part in the sentencing of an individual. Not only is the pre-sentencing report used to determine whether an individual is eligible to receive probation, but it provides a recommendation to the judge regarding the length of a sentence that the probation officer believes should be imposed. Along with determining eligibility for probation, the pre-sentencing report allows for easier classification of an individual, and assists in determining what programs the individual should be admitted to, or excluded from (Sexton, 2006).

The law requires that a pre-sentencing investigation (PSI) and report are completed. No court can impose a felony sentence without first conducting a PSI and

writing a corresponding report. Along with the law requiring the PSI be conducted, there are certain requirements for what must be included in the pre-sentencing report, as well as what must be done with it. The defense counsel must be provided with a copy of the report; the defendant and the defendant's counsel must also be advised of the factual contents of the report as well as any conclusions that are drawn from the report (Sexton, 2006).

The specific information that must be included in the report are an analysis of the "defendant's history of delinquency or criminality, physical or mental condition, family situation and background, economic status, education, occupation, personal habits, and any other matters that the court directs to be included" (Sexton, 2006, p. 11). All of this information is then used to determine what the defendant's needs are when considering treatment, counseling and rehabilitation, as well as education; it also determines which correctional-institutional or community-based programs and resources individuals should participate in to address their needs (Sexton, 2006). This pre-sentencing investigation and report are essential in determining what obstacles individuals face that need to be addressed, as well as the different programs they should participate in to provide them with the greatest chance at being successful on supervision.

Probation officers therefore have a large influence on whether or not an individual receives probation in the first place, as well as the conditions and treatments that an individual will receive if sentenced to probation. Through the pre-sentencing report, officers have been described as having a "substantial direct effect on actual sentences," as well as being heavily relied on by judges when making sentencing decisions (Walsh, 1985). The pre-sentencing investigation is used to make recommendations that are

consistent with the assessment as well as to ensure “individual justice” (Walsh, 1985, p. 290). This means that all probationers do not receive the same treatments, but are enrolled in treatments and programs that should be beneficial based on the assessment of their needs.

Research has shown that judges follow the recommendations of the probation officers quite closely, based on the belief that probation officers should have the ability to apply their knowledge to recommend the proper sentencing alternatives for each individual case (Walsh, 1985). Although the probation officers’ recommendations are closely followed, there are common criteria that judges find especially important to consider when determining a sentence for probation. The primary criteria include "prior record, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, employment history, education, family criminality, and whether the offender had dependent children" (Walsh, 1985, p. 300).

2.5 “*What Works*”

As discussed previously, the “what works” principles refer to the programs that have been shown to be most effective through evidence-based research. Among the most effective principles for probation interventions include the risk classification, targeting criminogenic needs, responsivity, type of treatment, community-based services, as well as program integrity. Intervention should be community-based in order for the individual to immediately apply the skills learned to everyday life. Interventions should also stress program integrity, which requires that the intervention must be managed properly and should have goals that remain the same throughout the entire program regardless of results (Astbury, 2008).

Correctional treatments should include a cognitive-behavioral approach and should address an individual's specific issues, including attitudes, values, peers, and substance abuse (Latessa, 2004). Treatment should focus on the offender's anti-social thinking as well as social circumstances; this is tied to the belief that the offender's informal social controls such as family have a large impact on the success of treatment (Hollin, 1999). Treatment should therefore also include family-based interventions if necessary (Latessa, 2004).

Along with what is being treated, the delivery of the programs is also important (Hollin, 1999). The duration of treatment is an essential component to be taken into consideration. The length of treatment should not be too short because it would be difficult to attain sustained change in a small amount of time. The recommended time for treatment programs is about 18 months, which is enough time to focus on sustained changes concerning thoughts and behaviors (Taxman, 2002). If an intervention does not address an individual's specific needs chances for recidivism increase; therefore, interventions should be matched and appropriate for each individual to ensure the probationer is provided the greatest chance at being successful (Shearer & King, 2004).

Through evaluation of criminal justice practices it has been determined that incarceration has not been successful in preventing crime. In response to this realization, there has been a return to an effort to rehabilitate offenders. This effort to rehabilitate individuals is consistent with recent efforts by probation and the correction systems, such as cognitive-behavioral therapies, discussed previously. Along with cognitive-behavioral therapies, targeting predictors of recidivism, as well as ensuring sufficient amounts of treatment largely influence success of probation (Cullen, Eck, & Lowenkamp, 2002).

Rehabilitation is most difficult when individuals are dependent upon a substance. Offenders with criminal histories and drug and alcohol problems have a greater chance of recidivating than individuals who do not have a history of dependence (Gray, Fields, & Maxwell, 2001). Along with these characteristics, age, gender, sentence length, the type of offender, marital status, education level, and employment combined together all influence an individual's chance of success on probation (Sims & Jones, 1997).

Another finding from evidence-based practice research is that collaboration between agencies is essential for supervision to be effective. To prevent recidivism, multiple criminal justice agencies such as prisons, probation, employment agencies, health providers, housing, and treatment facilities must coordinate services (Brown, 2005). Collaboration among different agencies ensures that the individual is receiving the assistance needed to be successful in society. Coordination also keeps better tabs on specific individuals to ensure they are completing the steps required by their conditions.

One issue continually discussed with regards to effectiveness of probation is officer caseloads. Due to lack of resources, such as funding or personnel, officers are often responsible for supervising a large number of individuals. Studies have shown, however, that caseloads do not significantly affect the quality of supervision. Decreases in the number of individuals that an officer supervises have not shown to improve rates of success. This is because often after caseloads are reduced improvements are not made in the way in which officers supervise the probationers. For caseload size to influence the success of probation, evidence-based practices must guide the supervision to ensure that the necessary adjustments are made that will increase chances of success (Jalbert, Rhodes, Flygare, & Kane, 2010).

Decreasing an officer's caseload may not increase the success of individuals on probation because it may actually lead to an increase of technical violations. If an officer increases the number of contacts with an individual, the chances of the probationer being caught violating a condition of probation also increase. This means that decreasing an officer's caseload will not necessarily lead to increases in numbers of probationers successfully completing supervision (Jalbert et al, 2010).

2.6 Tools used to effectively supervise probationers

There are other tools used in conjunction with the risk and needs assessment that may determine the services that an individual needs during supervision. Among these tools are different contacts, types of monitoring technologies, as well as drug testing. These programs and conditions are applied to the individual based on the risk and needs assessment, as well as what the probation officer believes will be most beneficial to assist the offender with successfully completing supervision.

Contacts are an essential tool because interactions allow probation officers to observe as well as discuss with the offender progress that has been made with the conditions of supervision. Among the different types of contacts an officer may have with a probationer are home visits, which have been shown to be very beneficial. Home contacts allow for the officers to verify information that they are given by the probationers. They also allow for verification of the individual's home address as well as direct observance the individual the officer is supervising. During home contacts officers can better understand the environment the offender is living in from an outsider's point of view. They can then determine whether there are issues with a probationer's living

circumstances that may increase challenges to abiding by conditions, such as living with others who are substance abusers (Taxman et al., 2004). These allow for the officers to develop relationships with the families, neighbors, friends, or others in the community of who have close relationships with the offender. Establishing relationships through home contacts allows for probationers to feel comfortable within their own home environment. It also allows for officers to obtain a large amount of valuable information about the individual they are supervising (Taxman et al., 2004).

Community contacts occur at the individual's place of employment or other places. These also allow officers to view offenders within their own environment, and to gain information offenders might otherwise not have provided. Office and phone contacts allow for the officers to continuously monitor the offenders' employment and living situations. Frequent interactions and constant contact will form a relationship between the probation officer and the probationer (Taxman et al., 2004).

New technologies such as monitoring devices have also become important tools for probation officers. The most common method is position monitoring which determines whether or not an individual is at home. A bracelet is attached to the offender's ankle and hooked up to a sensor in the home. Schedules are set up between an individual and the probation officers to determine when they can leave for activities such as school, work, meetings with the probation officer, drug or alcohol treatment, or other approved activities. If the individual leaves home without authorization, the bracelet will be triggered and immediately notify the probation officer (Taxman et al., 2004).

More advanced types of monitoring devices such as global positioning satellites (GPS) have become increasingly popular. These devices allow for the continual

monitoring of an individual's position. These devices help ensure that individuals are where they are supposed to be, and that they do not go to certain areas where they should not be. For example, the officer can ensure that a drug addict refrains from going near known drug sites or that a sex offender stays away from schools or other areas where there may be children. These areas are known as "triggers," and ensuring that the offenders remain away from them increases public safety as well the individual's chances for success (Taxman et al., 2004).

Another common tool used by probation officers today is drug testing through urinalysis, which may be conducted in the probation office. Drug testing is often a mandatory condition dictated by the court. Drug testing allows officers to obtain quick and accurate results of whether or not an individual is using drugs and/or abiding by conditions of supervision. If an individual is continually testing positive for the use of drugs and lying to the probation officer about drug use it is often an indication that the individual is resistant to change, not motivated, or in denial, and needs assistance through drug treatment (Taxman et al., 2004).

It has been found that 35 to 50 percent of individuals on probation should be receiving drug treatment due to substance abuse (Taxman, 2006). Ensuring that individuals who are dependent upon a substance receive treatment is essential for success on probation; reoffending is often linked to an individual's problems with substance abuse (Visher & Travis, 2003). Being addicted to drugs or alcohol will create barriers to other programs and elements that are essential to succeed within the community. For example, finding and obtaining employment will be difficult if an individual is struggling with an addiction (Brown, 2005).

Continually testing individuals for drug use holds them accountable for their actions. Drug testing acts as an external control and deterrent to drug use because of the knowledge that a violation may result from a positive test. In order for drug testing to be effective, those who are compliant and continually test negative must be rewarded, while those who test positive must be made aware that their noncompliant behavior will not be accepted (Taxman et al, 2004).

Another tool that increases the chances of an individual successfully completing supervision is assistance with obtaining employment. Having steady employment significantly influences whether or not an individual will be successful on probation (Liberton, Silverman, & Blount, 1992). Being employed is one of the major steps to reintegration into society and directly impacts many other aspects of one's life. An unemployed individual will be unable to pay bills or afford other necessities to survive. These obstacles will often lead an individual to resort to crime, either to survive or as a result of facing large amounts of stress, encouraging the individual to give into triggers within the community (Allender, 2004).

Although there are many different factors that influence whether an individual will succeed on probation, there are certain types of programs and conditions that have been shown to contribute to greater chances of success. As previously mentioned, these include evidence-based practices, cognitive-based therapies, needs/risk assessments, and the use of pre-sentencing investigations. These tools have been determined as contributing to success through the "what works" in community supervision research conducted in response to the claim that nothing works in offender treatment. Every individual has different needs that have to be addressed, which makes determining what

contributes to success difficult; cognitive-behavior therapies and risk/needs assessments allow for more individualized supervision and therefore have become widely implemented as well as regarded as contributing to success of individuals on probation. Understanding whether probation officers believe these approaches and programs contribute to success will establish whether these approaches found successful through research contribute to success in everyday use.

Table1: *Factors Contributing to Success*

Study	Factors or indicators	Sample size	Methods	Findings/ what contributes to success
Hepburn and Griffin; 2004	Indicators of Social Bonds: -employment -support of family & friends -conventional activities & groups	258 adult males Data collected: Jan 1, 1997- June 30, 1999	Collected data measuring social bonding→ employment status & relationships	Success determined by: -strong social bonds to conventional activities/groups -full-time employment -positive support of family & friends
Sims and Jones; 1997	-Background info (age, gender, race, size of county, type of crime, sentence length, level of supervision, months until supervision ended, reason terminated -scores used to determine level of supervision	2,850 felony probationers Data collected: July 1- Oct 31, 1993	Collected data→ Examined probationers revoked from probation -background info -scores used to determine supervision level	-shorter sentences -as age ↑ success increased -having fewer address changes, higher level of education, financial stability Indicators of success found to include: marital status, # of past convictions

Study	Factors or indicators	Sample size	Methods	Findings/ what contributes to success
Bourgon, Bonta, Rugge, Scott, and Yessine; 2010	Evaluation of STICS program -probation officers behaviors influence behavior of probationer	53 officers submitted data	Experimental group contained officers who received STICS training (risk, need, responsivity principles & skill maintenance) & compared to control group which did not receive additional training	Officers w/ training ^ focus on criminogenic needs & pro-criminal attitudes → higher quality of Risk-Need-Responsivity based skills & interventions
Lowenkamp, Smith, and Latessa; 2006	Determine result of adherence to risk & need principle	66 community-based correctional programs	Offenders placed in jail & prison diversion programs	Programs relating to risk & need factors experienced greater success -more factors adhere to → most effective
Jalbert, Rhodes, Flygare, and Kane; 2010	Success of ISP caseloads v. high-normal supervision caseloads (recidivism, technical violations, EBP services)	8,878 Probationers 2001-2007	Used survival analysis to study time until recidivism	Individuals have a greater chance of success on high-normal caseload v. ISP because changes in supervision such as EBP need to be implemented along with change in caseload

Study	Factors or indicators	Sample size	Methods	Findings/ what contributes to success
Liberton, Silverman, and Blount; 1992	Employment stability, age, marital status, education, crime committed, monthly income, time spent incarcerated prior to sentencing	427 first-time felony probationers 1980-1982	Data collected on probationers as well as follow-up period of at least 4 yrs	Success= completion of prescribed probationary period violation-free -Marriage, stable employment, home life, & financial situation= more likely to succeed -spending < 2 days incarcerated waiting for sentence showed significant relation w/ success of probation
Gendreau, Little, and Goggin; 1996	coded as predictors of recidivism: age, criminal history, companions, family factors, gender, social achievement, substance abuse -social class, intelligence, personal distress	After setting criteria, 131 studies were coded as suitable	Meta-analysis of studies	Confirmed age, criminal history, companions, family factors, gender, social achievement & substance abuse as predictors -criminogenic needs & antisocial associates= strongest correlates of criminal conduct
Gray, Fields, and Maxwell; 2001	Characteristics of offender, prior criminal histories, drug & alcohol problems, type of crime committed	1,500 probationers randomly selected (200 cases oversampled)	Analyzed cases to determine factors associated with violations	-majority violations= minor infractions -prior drug use, less educated= more likely technical violation

Study	Factors or indicators	Sample size	Methods	Findings/ what contributes to success
				-unemployed, previous misd. conviction, assaultive crime= more likely commit new crime
Flores, Lowenkamp, Smith, and Latessa; 2006	-10 risk & criminogenic need areas -demographic variables (age, sex, ethnicity)	2,107 adult federal probationers	-using LSI-R risk/needs assessment to more successfully supervise probationers -compared LSI-R scores to recidivism data	LSI-R showed to predict recidivism- therefore risk/needs assessment tools should be used to guide probation programs and increase proper supervision to increase success on probationer
Mackenzie and Li; 2002	-impact of arrest & probation on criminal activities -changes in life circumstances -increases in social bonds (living w/ spouse, attending school, or work) & decreases in risk behaviors	125 offenders	Looked at self-report criminal activities of individuals; interviewed when began probation & (107) again 6 months later -monthly measures (event calendars) used to collect data	-arrest & probation (^ in formal social controls & social bonds= associated with decreases in criminal activities

3. POLICY AND THEORY

Probation originated during the nineteenth century with John Augustus who developed the concept of community corrections. His model of community corrections emphasized “building a working relationship with offenders, helping them to establish better social networks and using punishments strategically” (Bogue, Diebel, & O’Conner, 2008, p. 31). Since the establishment of community corrections, the emphasis has alternated between reducing recidivism and improving offender outcomes. To this day the approach of probation is continually changing between models of law enforcement and rehabilitation (Bogue et al., 2008).

Throughout the history of our criminal justice system, differing emphases on programs and policies have had a significant influence on the use of probation. For example, decisions and policies regarding incapacitation have largely impacted the entire criminal justice system, including the use of probation. The focus of the criminal justice system has changed between retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence, as well as rehabilitation throughout the years; as the focus changes, probation policies and practices also change in accordance to the current focus of the criminal justice system (Wodahl & Garland, 2009).

Recently there has been an emphasis on “get tough policies” that were accompanied by a “war on drugs.” These policies relied on incarceration as a form of deterrence in hopes of preventing individuals from committing future crime, and drastically increased the number of individuals needing supervision by the government (Olivares & Burton, 1996). Along with increasing numbers of individuals within prisons,

these tough policies led to an increase in the use of probation for individuals who would previously have been sentenced to a lighter punishment.

Three-strike policies as well as determinate sentencing have contributed to the enormous increase in the prison population and have impacted every aspect of the criminal justice system, including probation (Allender, 2004). Individuals who failed drug tests while on probation were immediately violated and often reincarcerated after a certain number of positive drug tests. These tough policies have not been successful and have caused increased problems within the correctional system (Olivares & Burton, 1996). There is an increasing reliance on probation to alleviate the problems stemming from escalating numbers of incarcerated individuals.

Based on these results, as well as considerable research, it was concluded that these “get tough policies” and incapacitation at record numbers was not the solution to deal with the country’s crime problem (Olivares & Burton, 1996; Mackenzie & Li, 2002). As prisons began to be viewed as ineffective, the government increased its reliance on community-based corrections such as probation and parole. Although these forms of community corrections had been previously available, they did not become widely used until the 1950’s and 1960’s (Wodahl & Garland, 2009).

In response to the realization that incapacitation has not been successful, there has been a return to the original efforts of Augustus to the rehabilitation of offenders. Allowing individuals to serve a sentence on probation versus incarceration allows them to remain in the community while attempting to address the issues that lead to criminal behaviors. Attempts to rehabilitate probationers are reflected in recent efforts by the probation and corrections systems to provide assistance for change through programs

such as cognitive-behavioral therapies and a focus on the individual's specific needs. Further, targeting predictors of recidivism and ensuring that individuals receive sufficient amounts of treatment have largely influenced both rehabilitation and the success of probation (Cullen et al., 2002).

The goals of probation, as well as governmental policies have large impacts on whether probationers are successful on supervision; these emphases, as well as the factors that lead to success of individuals are directly influenced by policies and laws. Policies that establish laws for probationers are influenced by the government's current criminal justice focus and are established at all levels of the government. States as well as the federal government have established statutes that set mandatory conditions that probationers must follow. Along with these mandatory conditions, probation officers also have the discretion to apply other conditions that they believe will contribute to an individual's chances to live a law-abiding life. Policies and laws that require certain conditions of probation have a large impact on supervision and whether or not individuals will be successful.

3.1 New York State Policies

New York Penal Law § 65.10 describes the Conditions of Probation and of Conditional Discharge. The statute contains five sections that describe the numerous conditions that probationers must follow. First, the court may use its discretion to establish conditions that it finds necessary to ensure the individual will live a law-abiding life. Second, the conditions must be related to the conduct as well as rehabilitation of the individual; this includes avoiding injurious habits, refraining from frequenting unlawful

or disreputable places, as well as consorting with disreputable individuals. Along with the goal of rehabilitation, conditions require an individual to be employed, attend school, or complete training that will assist in attaining employment as well as undergo treatment for medical or psychiatric issues, or participate in alcohol or substance abuse treatments if determined to be necessary. Mandatory conditions also include supporting dependents as well as paying any restitution if applicable (Penal Law art. 65, § 65.10, 2010).

The court has the authority to assign any of the above conditions if it is determined that it will assist the individual with living a law-abiding life. Along with these conditions, the probationer is required to report to the probation officer as directed by either the officer or by the court. Probationers are also required to remain in the jurisdiction and notify their officer before leaving. The probation officer must be notified of any changes in address, and the probationer must answer any questions that the probation officer asks. An individual on probation may be determined to need electronic monitoring and therefore be required to abide by the rules and regulations that accompany monitoring, such as a curfew. An individual on probation may not unlawfully possess a controlled substance. Probationers are required to submit to a drug test within 15 days of beginning probation as well as at least twice thereafter (Penal Law art. 65, § 65.10, 2010).

3.2 Federal Policies

Federal Probation guidelines are found in the United States Code Title 18 Crimes and Criminal Procedures § 3563, conditions of probation. First, while on probation a probationer may not commit another federal, state, or local crime. This means that if an

individual commits a crime while on probation, the individual will not only be charged with a new crime, but also with a technical violation for violating a condition of probation (18 U.S.C. § 3563, 2008). Individuals on federal probation must also cooperate with the collection of a DNA sample, which is required from the Backlog Elimination Act of 2000. Along with these requirements, probationers must pay any fines or restitution that is owed, as well as notify their probation officer of any material changes that may affect these payments (18 U.S.C. § 3563, 2008).

In addition to mandatory conditions, discretionary conditions may also be required for the probationer to follow if related to the factors of the crime and/or current circumstance. There are many possible discretionary conditions that may require an individual to refrain from going to certain places, support dependents, refrain from alcohol or drug use, undergo treatment if necessary, remain within a certain jurisdiction, as well as perform community service. Other possible discretionary conditions include gaining suitable employment, residing in a community corrections facility, permitting the probation officer to make home visits, as well as home confinement at all times unless permitted to leave by the probation officer (18 U.S.C. § 3563, 2008).

Both state and federal guidelines also impose additional mandatory conditions on individuals who commit certain types of crimes. For example, sexual offenders or individuals who are convicted of a crime involving domestic violence will be required to adhere to additional conditions. Under the New York State statute, sexual offenders may have to abide by conditions that restrict their access to the internet as well as prohibit them from being within a certain distance of a school or park. Under federal law, sexual offenders must register as such. Federally, individuals who are convicted for domestic

violence offenses may be required to attend rehabilitation programs (18 U.S.C. § 3563, 2008; Penal Law art. 65, § 65.10, 2010).

The extensive list of conditions that a probationer is required to abide by does not always contribute to the individual's chances of success. The more conditions an individual must follow, the greater the chances of technical violations due to noncompliance. Many of the conditions focus on restricting certain actions of the individual. Often an individual's circumstance makes it difficult to comply with certain conditions. For example, if an individual who has an addiction is living with family members who are substance abusers, it is more difficult to refrain from using. Also, the requirement of employment may lead to challenges for a probationer; being convicted of a crime will often make it difficult for a probationer to be hired for work. Having a criminal record and being on probation may also create challenges for individuals to be approved to live in certain housing.

Research shows that individuals with attachments and positive social bonds have a greater chance of succeeding on probation. Both the federal and state statutes attempt to enhance this success by requiring the individual to either attend school or to obtain employment. A strong relationship with a positive individual or a mentor to turn to is also seen as essential to a probationer's success. Not only will attending school or work increase the individual's social bonds, it will also increase one's skills and ability to succeed, not only on probation but throughout life.

Conditions of probation should be tailored to address individual issues that create obstacles to successful completion of probation. Both statutes allow for probation officers to address an individual probationer's needs by allowing the officers to use their

discretion to add conditions that they feel are necessary for the probationer's success. Allowing officers to use discretion permits implementation of conditions tailored to the success of each probationer. Although this may be the case, in order for this to occur there must be programs and resources available to these officers that will provide them with the opportunity to do so. For example, high caseloads may impede officers' ability to provide the proper individual assistance to each probationer they are supervising.

Policies such as the New York State Penal Law and the federal statute have an enormous influence on the success of probationers. The conditions they mandate attempt to address underlying issues that the probationers may face, while also protecting the community. Allowing probation officers to set additional standards based on individual circumstances increases the use of discretion in determining what conditions the probationer may need. An increased focus on individualized supervision will result in an increase in the success of probationers.

3.3 Social Control Theory

Numerous elements that influence an individual's bonds to society significantly affect individuals who are on probation. Social bonds, specifically employment and marital status have a large influence on an individual's success while on probation (Gray et al., 2001). The social control theory emphasizes that the more an individual has to lose by being sent to prison the less likely that individual will be to commit another crime. Individuals with conventional social bonds have resources to turn to that may assist them in succeeding. They also have others whom they care about and are responsible for and who would be let down if they continue to commit crimes.

Hirschi's social control theory explains that when an individual's bond to society is broken, that individual is more likely to engage in delinquent or criminal behavior. Attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief are the elements that significantly influence an individual's social bond to society. The first element is the strength of an individual's attachment to people, such as family and friends, as well as institutions, such as school and clubs (Williams & McShane, 2010).

Involvement, the second element, includes the activities that an individual is associated with and also focuses on the time available for conventional or unconventional behaviors. If an individual is busy working, going to school, taking care of a family, or participating in positive social activities then there will be less time available to commit crimes or participate in deviant behaviors (Williams & McShane, 2010). Commitment consists of the investment one has made to conventional society; the more an individual invests, the more there is to lose from engaging in criminal behaviors (Gray et al., 2001).

The fourth element that contributes to an individual's bond to society is belief, which determines whether or not an individual will acknowledge social rules in place and view them as fair or not. These four elements combined contribute to an individual's social bond. Social bonds establish relationships with different aspects of society; if any of these elements is weakened, it interrupts the individual's entire bond to conventional society. Weakened bonds to society give individuals less to lose if they are caught, and therefore increase their chances of committing crimes (Williams & McShane, 2010).

Factors that have been determined to lead to successful completion of a probation sentence include stability in employment, home life, and financial situation (Liberton et al., 1992). Informal social controls such as family, school, and employment have a large

impact on the success of an individual on probation. These social controls “create obligations and restraints that impose significant costs for translating criminal propensity into actions” (Mackenzie & Li, 2002, p. 248). This means that the strength of these bonds will influence the individual’s decisions and determine whether or not they conform to conventional societal norms or deviate and commit crimes. As the number of social bonds and attachments an individual has to society increases, so does the cost of committing a crime and recidivating (Hepburn & Griffin, 2004).

Conventional bonds to society such as ties to social institutions increase the social controls of an individual. This increase in social control decreases criminal activity. Studies have shown that increases in informal social control have a large impact on individuals and their propensity to commit crime. When individuals live with children or spouses, are attending school, or are working, they commit fewer crimes (Mackenzie & Li, 2002). Studies have shown that individuals will be more likely to be unsuccessful if they do not complete the steps that allow them to reintegrate into society, such as gaining employment or developing other bonds (Allender, 2004).

Collectively, these elements make up an individual’s social bond to society and significantly influence whether or not they commit crime. These elements are directly related to one another each alone would not be sufficient to explain how a bond to society influences whether or not an individual succeeds on probation. Individuals who have attachments to conventional society, invest time and effort into something, and believe in positive ways of surviving will be more likely to put forth an effort to succeed on probation because they will have more to lose if they fail.

The elements viewed as important in social control theory are used to determine the level of supervision an individual needs while on probation. Consistent with social control theory, intensive treatment may increase the social bonds that high-risk offenders have to conventional society, therefore increasing their chance for long-term positive change (Mackenzie & Li, 2002). The opposite is found for low-risk offenders, whom when placed into programs that are too intensive or not consistent with their risk level have a greater chance of recidivating. This is due to an interruption in the positive social relationships that have already developed, such as family, employment, and school (Latessa, 2004). Determining the risk level of the individual and using this to guide decision making about supervision leads to improvement in outcomes (Alexander & VanBenschoten, 2008).

The social control theory provides a significant explanation for why an individual would struggle on probation. There are countless factors that lead to an individual's success and one of the largest is the social bond to society. Positive social relationships to other individuals as well as institutions will provide the support that an individual will need to succeed, and are essential to recognize when developing programs for individuals on probation.

3.4 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory holds that behaviors are learned and that individuals seek to enhance pleasure while avoiding pain. The theory describes how punishment or reinforcement influences an individual's decision making. If an action is reinforced by a social environment, then an individual is likely to continue to commit this act. For

example, if the majority of people in a community are stealing in order to survive and are not caught or punished, an individual will continue to commit this act, feeling it is acceptable and justified (Williams & McShane, 2010).

Definitions as well as expectations are learned and provide an individual with guidance to whether or not an action is allowed in society. Individuals will learn whether or not an action is acceptable depending on whether they are rewarded or punished as a result of the action. If crime is rewarded through material gains in a subculture, then an individual will find this action to be reinforced. On the other hand, if an act is punished, an individual will learn that this action cannot be committed in society and will refrain from committing the act again. This theory is often used as part of the rational choice or deterrence theories, which assume that actions or crimes are thought about before committed (Williams & McShane, 2010).

Programs such as cognitive-behavioral therapies have become a popular approach within probation. These types of programs refer to a range of therapies that address behavior and thoughts through social learning theory-based interventions. The programs are based on general theoretical concepts, such as that all actions result from thought patterns and values that originate early in one's life. Since thoughts determine behavior, if thoughts are changed, then as a result behaviors will also be changed (MacGill, 2007). It has been shown that addressing an individual's cognitive behavior or thought process will produce a reinforcing effect that will continue beyond the individual's supervision. These therapies are therefore more effective than merely addressing a probationer's behavior because the goal should not only be for the individual to complete supervision, but to succeed as a conventional member of society (Hansen, 2008).

Cognitive-behavioral programs include activities such as role playing, rewards and punishments, rehearsals and practice, and modeling. These programs are most effective at addressing styles of thinking and behaviors as well as antisocial attitudes (Shearer & King, 2004). Cognitive-behavioral therapies are consistent with social learning theory, which states that behaviors are learned and therefore thoughts and behaviors can be controlled through social learning-based interventions.

Conditions of probation as well as programs offered to probationers are based on both social control and social learning theory. The social control theory emphasizes that social bonds and conventional connections to society are essential for all individuals, especially probationers. Policies influencing probation based on this theory include such conditions as requiring an individual to obtain employment or to attend school as well as to refrain from interactions with individuals who encourage unconventional behaviors. Other conditions require that individuals attend treatments if necessary and meet with the probation officer on a regular basis to increase connections with conventional society.

Cognitive-behavioral programs are based on the social learning theory, and have been effective in addressing anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, antisocial conduct, and other behavior problems that have been attributed to causing individuals to commit crimes. These behaviors have often been attributed to leading individuals on probation to commit crimes; therefore, addressing these behaviors is essential to lead to successful completion of a sentence of probation. Cognitive-behavioral treatments such as role playing, skill rehearsals, and simulations that focus on addressing “specific skill deficits that lead to criminal behavior” have typically improved offender outcomes (Bogue et al., 2008, p. 34).

Due to the findings that cognitive-behavioral therapies improve offender outcomes, along with the increased reliance their use in probation programs, one hypothesis was that officers would likewise emphasize the use of these programs as contributing to success. Programs based on evidence-based practices are similarly described as highly successful and because of this it was anticipated that probation officers would base their supervision on these practices.

The evidence-based practice of addressing an individual's risk and need principles hypothesized as essential to a probationer's success was expected to be mentioned throughout the interviews as guiding the probationer's supervision plans. These principles are among other aspects of probation that are seen as contributing to success and are included in the "what works" research. This research also cites collaboration between agencies and lower caseloads as substantial contributors to success. Based on this research, another hypothesis was that officers would emphasize collaboration between different agencies in the area, as well as find that caseloads are too high to effectively supervise individuals.

Among the hypotheses are that officers' goals of everyday use of probation will be consistent with research, which describes conflicting goals of law enforcement and rehabilitation. These competing goals have been present since the origin of probation and have led to different use of programs and treatments based on the emphasized objective. It was hypothesized that officers will emphasize rehabilitation and the use of these types of programs, consistent with the large amount of research legitimizing their importance.

Also hypothesized was that differences would arise in regards to the goals of each agency as well as the use of approaches such as evidence-based practices and cognitive-

behavioral therapies. The use of specific types of programs was expected to vary due to differences in caseloads as well as available funding. Also mentioned are officer contacts, different types of monitoring technologies, and drug testing; these tools should therefore be highly relied upon by the officers interviewed.

Therefore, if responses are consistent with the hypotheses, officers should mention evidence-based practices, cognitive-behavioral therapies, risk and needs assessments, and social bonds such as employment, family, and education as essential for success of an individual on probation. Among the hypotheses is that the officers' goals of everyday use of probation will be consistent with research describing conflicting goals of law enforcement and rehabilitation. These competing goals lead to the different use of programs and treatments based on the emphasized objective. It was hypothesized that officers will emphasize rehabilitation and the use of these types of programs, consistent with the large amount of research emphasizing their importance.

4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

Interviews were conducted with probation officers to determine their perceptions of factors that lead to the success of individuals on probation. During the discussion, the probation officers provided explanations for what factors or characteristics contribute to an individual's success on probation. Because they are the individuals working closest to probationers under supervision, probation officers were interviewed in order to provide valuable insight into the challenges these probationers are facing. By virtue of their experiences it was expected that the officers would have the working perspective to explain which factors lead to an individual being successful.

Officers were asked to identify the most common reasons that individuals succeed while being supervised, as well as what challenges individuals on probation face that influence success. Through the interviews the officers were asked to provide insight into what improvements could be made to increase the chances of individuals succeeding on probation. Officers could decline to answer questions if they did not believe they had the knowledge for a complete response.

To protect the privacy of the officers who participated, all of the questions were approved through the Rochester Institute of Technology's Internal Review Board (IRB); this ensured that none of the responses to questions asked would lead to harm of either the officers or anyone they were supervising or referring to. The questions as well as the method used to contact the officers to ask for participation were approved prior to any contacts being made. Obtaining approval from the IRB for every step of the process ensured protection of the participants from negative effects of participation.

Qualitative interviews allow for researchers to obtain in-depth information and explore the research through follow-up questions. In this study, probation officers were interviewed to establish the factors that they find most often lead to successful completion of probation. Responding to open-ended questions allowed the probation officers to provide their opinion without having specific answers to choose from (Babbie, 2007). This also encouraged the officers to provide any additional information that they believed was relevant.

4.1 Participants and Sampling

Interviewing numerous probation officers from the Federal Probation and Pre-Trial Services and Monroe County Probation allowed for the results to be applied to different types of probationers, including different risk level offenders as well as individuals with different characteristics. Often officers may specialize in specific caseloads; therefore, these officers were able to provide knowledge concerning a certain group of individuals. Officers interviewed included those who supervise a general adult population, high risk offenders, gang members, individuals convicted of DWI, sexual offenders, and other groups of probationers.

Interviewing probation officers from both agencies further allowed for the findings to be generalized to the adult probation population. The different probation agencies have different laws and policies, and face different circumstances when supervising individuals. Also, individuals on county or federal probation are often convicted of different types of crimes. The agencies also differ in their employees as well as the area that they supervise. The Rochester Federal Probation office employs 18

officers who are responsible for supervising 443 individuals. The Monroe County office employs around 233 officers and is responsible for supervising 6500 probationers. The geographical area that is supervised also differs. The Rochester Federal office is responsible for Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates Counties. Rochester is the center of the County as well as where both agencies is located; it is beneficial to have a general understanding of the characteristics of Rochester, Monroe County, and New York state when considering the responses from the officers.

Table 2: *Monroe County, City of Rochester, and New York State Statistics, 2010*

Facts	Rochester	Monroe County	New York
Population, 2010	210,565	744,344	19,378,102
White persons	43.7%	76.1%	65.7%
Black persons	41.7%	15.2%	15.9%
Hispanic/ Latino	16.4%	7.3%	17.6%
Living in same house 1 yr/more, 2005-2009	78%	85.7%	88.3%
Foreign born persons, 2005-2009	7.7%	7.8%	21.3%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2005-2009	16.2%	11.6%	28.5%
High school graduates age 25+, 2005-2009	78.6%	88.4%	84.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher, pct of persons age 25+, 2005-2009	24.6%	34.4%	31.8%
Homeownership rate, 2005-2009	42.5%	67.3%	55.7%
Persons below poverty level, percent, 2009	29.1%	13.4%	14.2%
Violent crime rate, 2010	2,229	2,821	13,833

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010; UCR, FBI, US Department of Justice; DCJS, Uniform Crime/Incident-Based Reporting systems.

The agencies also differ with the requirements to be employed as a probation officer. To become a U.S. Federal Probation officer, an individual must have prior law enforcement experience as well as a minimum of an undergraduate degree. A background investigation must be conducted before employment, with a reinvestigation conducted every five years. Workplace drug testing is also required prior to employment, and officers may be submitted to random drug testing (U.S. Courts, 2011).

To be qualified to sit for the civil service exam to be employed as s Monroe County Probation officer, an individual must graduate college with a Bachelors degree. Required for employment, an individual must have a class D license, participate in peace officer training, complete 47 hours of firearms training, pass a drug test, and pass both an extensive background investigation and physiological examination.

Table 3: *Federal and Monroe County Probation*

	Officers	Probationers Supervised	Requirements to become an officer	Area responsible to supervise
Federal-Rochester Office	18	443 individuals on active supervision 169 individuals on inactive supervision	Background investigation, prior law enforcement, drug testing, minimum of an undergraduate degree	Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, & Yates County
Monroe County	233	6500	Bachelors degree, Firearm & peace officer training, Drug tests, extensive background & psychological evaluation	Monroe County

Information provided by personal contact and Monroe County crime lab

The interview process was conducted between February and June of 2011. Snowball sampling was used to find probation officers willing to participate in an interview. This non-probability type of sampling relied on contact information given by probation officers and whether or not officers were interested in participating. Once one officer was contacted, this officer provided contact information for others in different departments; this allowed for interviews of a range of probation officers who work with different risk level and types of offenders on a daily basis.

Additionally, a previous internship supervisor provided contact information for other probation officers who might be willing to be interviewed. After the contact information was provided, the individuals were emailed and asked if they were interested in participating; if an officer was interested, an interview was scheduled at a convenient time and place. To recruit additional individuals from county probation, a staff development officer emailed colleagues in the department inviting them to initiate contact if they were interested in participating.

Twelve officers were interviewed-- eight from Monroe County Probation and four from Federal Probation. Officers interviewed represented those in intensive supervision, those who supervise high risk offenders, those who hold a specialized DWI population, general population, as well as pre-sentencing officers. Interviewing not only probation officers but also officers from pre-sentencing provided insight about the factors that are perceived as leading to success on probation throughout the entire process. The officers also had varying experience; three had worked as probation officers for less than five years, six had six to ten years of experience, and three had worked in probation for over 10 years.

4.2 Interview Content and Method

The interviews were conducted in person with the exception of one, which was conducted over the phone. The questions were asked in the same order unless varying the order of the questions more logically continued the thematic flow of the interview (see Appendix B). For example, if an officer was providing details about a program in a response, subsequent questions concerning that program would immediately follow instead of being asked in the original order. This prevented a repetitive feeling and allowed the interview to logically flow based on the officers' responses.

Prior to the interview the officers were notified that they could decline to answer any question they did not feel comfortable answering for any reason. Among the reasons that officer declined, was a lack of knowledge to adequately answer the question. Also, if officers were not aware of the subject matter of a specific question, any follow-up or probe questions were skipped. For example, if officers responded that they were not aware of any cognitive-behavioral therapy programs used in the department, probe questions seeking further explanation were skipped.

Concepts discussed included the different programs and treatments provided by probation as well as the different conditions that those being supervised are required to follow. Officers were asked their perspective on what programs provided leads to the greatest chance of success for individuals on probation. Probe questions were used throughout the interviews as necessary to obtain additional information and to allow the officers to clarify answers or otherwise elaborate on responses.

Probation programs that are offered were discussed to determine what different agencies find most successful for probationers. This established whether there are varying beliefs between the different agencies about program effectiveness.

Understanding the programs that the organizations use and whether the probation officers believe they are effective established whether the probationers being supervised under the different organizations have the same goals set for probation. This also determined whether the officers believe that probation programs offered emphasize law enforcement or rehabilitation.

Along with probation officers, pre-sentencing officers were also interviewed. Gaining knowledge from a pre-sentencing point of view was beneficial because these officers write the pre-sentencing reports that recommend whether or not individuals should be put on probation. This means that these officers determine whether they believe an individual will be successful in community supervision based on their current and historical situations. In addition, if the officer determines the individual should serve a sentence of probation, the officer also recommends those conditions the individual should be required to follow. The pre-sentencing report is relied extensively upon by the courts and used throughout supervision.

These officers are essential to the probation process because they conduct the initial interview and the risk and needs assessment. Throughout the interview, they find out details about the individual's history and current situation to determine whether or not probation would be suitable. They are also responsible for determining whether or not certain individuals will pose such a threat to society that they should not be given the opportunity to be supervised in the community.

The pre-sentencing officers were asked most of the questions that were asked of the probation officers. They were asked how many years they had worked in probation as well as what they believe is the most important goal of the process. They were also asked about the perception of risk and to explain the risk and needs assessment tool. Asking pre-sentencing officers questions about this assessment was very important because they established each individual's risk and needs.

The pre-sentencing officers were also asked about the most common factors that indicate whether an individual will be successful on probation; this question is important because whether or not an individual will receive probation or not is dependent on this determination. The pre-sentencing officers were then asked all of the same questions asked of the probation officers with regards to perceptions of current successful practices. These questions included what different programs or approaches contribute to success of probationers, what are the most typical treatments and conditions, what factors lead to the greatest chance of individuals being successful, what social bonds are essential, and lastly, what improvements could be made to increase an individual's chance of success.

The main goal of the interviews was to discuss recent trends in probation, including evidence-based practices, cognitive-behavioral therapies, and risk and needs assessments. Along with these trends, the officers were asked questions concerning caseload size and whether they believe that the number of individuals that an officer supervises influences the chances of success for probationers. Different types of programs and treatments- and whether the officers find them to be successful-- were also discussed. The information provided by the probation officers helped inform those programs and approaches that contribute to the greatest chance of success for individuals

on probation; it was expected that the officers' responses would correlate with the programs and treatments that were previously discussed and shown by research to be successful.

4.3 Procedure for Interviewing

A list of open-ended questions was used (see Appendix B). All of the officers were asked the same questions, with the exception of pre-sentencing officers who were asked very similar questions so that answers could be compared. If similar answers were provided, the information helped determine whether there are certain programs or factors that are consistently used and/or found to be successful throughout all levels of probation. Along with comparing the different answers with one another, the responses were compared with what research has determined to lead to success.

Asking these questions helped develop an understanding of the programs that are available to assist probationers in achieving success. Different programs and tools were discussed to determine whether probation officers find certain types of tools helpful in contributing to the success of probationers. Whether or not the officers find these programs useful was compared with what research has shown to be effective to determine whether it correlates with everyday use.

Prior to the interview, the officers were provided a copy of the information sheet (Appendix A) explaining the goals of the research and the types of questions that may be asked. The officers were notified that their participation was voluntary and that they were not required to provide a response to any questions that they did not feel comfortable answering. They were asked if they had any questions about the interview before it began and whether they wanted to proceed. The officers were notified that there

would not be any direct benefits from participation. They were told that they could ask questions any time during the interview, or afterwards they could contact the researcher or the human research director at RIT. The information sheet also explained that any information provided would remain anonymous and that findings would be reported only in the aggregate.

4.4 Interview Schedule

The officers were first asked how long they had worked in probation to gain a general idea of the amount of experience each had. Second, the officers were asked questions regarding their ideology of probation, including what they believe to be the most important goal of probation. This question was open to the probation officer's point of view; officers could answer based on their personal goals or the goals they set for the probationers.

Next, the officers were asked how security/safety and treatment/rehabilitation are balanced in probation. The officers were then asked to what extent they believe this balance is established by the organization versus individual officers. This question was based on the conflicting goals that officers face between rehabilitation and law enforcement. Whether officers find everyday probation to be based upon law enforcement or rehabilitation influences their entire supervision, including the types of programs that are offered as well as the conditions that probationers are required to follow.

The next topic included questions to determine the officer's perception of current successful practices in probation. They were asked: "What are different programs or

approaches that are used that are seen as contributing to the success of individuals on probation?” A probe question asked the officers to provide specific examples. The officers were asked how they would define the success of probation.

Next, officers were asked to describe the most typical treatments and conditions that probationers receive. There are mandatory requirements that everyone on probation is required to follow, as well discretionary conditions that may be required based on the opinion of the courts and officers. Knowing what conditions are most common shows what the most prominent challenges are that individuals face while on probation. For example, knowing that a large number of individuals are required to attend drug treatment programs indicates that substance abuse or drug addiction is a common issue that impedes success for those on probation.

Although probationers have the most control over their success, there are also other individuals and organizations that influence whether a probationer will successfully complete supervision. The officers were asked to provide specific examples of what social bonds they feel are essential for individuals to have to be successful on probation. Understanding what groups or social bonds influence the success of probation is beneficial when attempting to implement programs that will increase these types of social bonds for individuals. It was expected that officer’s responses would be consistent with the social bonding theory, and therefore certain social bonds such as family, education, and employment would be deemed as essential for success on supervision.

The next group of questions considered the officer’s perceptions of risk of the offender. To understand how the probation officers address the individual’s specific needs, they were asked how they determine what specific programs or treatments are

necessary for an individual. Also addressed was whether their office uses a risk and needs assessment tool and if so, how accurate they believe the tool is in determining what treatments or conditions an individual should receive. The risk and needs assessment has been determined to play a large role in supervision and it was therefore hypothesized that officers would view it as a fundamental tool towards successfully completing supervision.

Along with the risk and needs assessment tools, the officers were asked if they use evidence-based practices to guide their decisions of which programs and treatments would be beneficial for a certain individual. Asking about evidence-based practices provided insight into how the probation department as an organization evaluates the different programs available to probationers. Evidence-based practices are frequently mentioned as essential to provide proper assistance to probationers, and therefore were expected to be frequently mentioned and relied upon by the probation officers.

There are many different ways that an officer influences the success of the probationers. Along with understanding how probation officers and the programs they offer influence a probationer's success, the probation officers were asked about how they believe other aspects of supervision influence success. This included questions about the officers' perception of workload, such as whether they believe that an officer's caseload influences whether probationers are successful. Asking for specific examples was important in order to gain more than a simple yes or no answer.

Caseload size is often mentioned as an obstacle that many probation departments face. Research has shown that caseloads do not have these assumed effects on a probationer's success. Probation officers should know best whether they believe their

caseload is too large and whether this has any negative implications for success of the individuals they are supervising. Along with asking whether they believe their caseload influences success, they were asked their current caseload, as well as an average officer's caseload. They were also asked what in their opinion would be an optimal caseload. It is important to note that this answer depended on the type of officer being interviewed.

One method of treatment that has been described as very common in probation is cognitive-behavioral therapies. Officers were asked if their department offers any cognitive-behavioral therapy programs. Probe questions were used if the officers did not provide enough information. With such a large emphasis on cognitive-behavioral therapies in research, it was hypothesized that many of these types of programs would be described as contributing to success. Understanding whether these programs are widely used within probation departments, as well as if probation officers believe they lead to success, will determine whether the social learning theory correlates with everyday use of community supervision. The mention of these programs will also correlate with a rehabilitation model of probation versus law enforcement.

The officers were asked what they believe is the most common factor that contributes to failure among probationers, as well as what could be done to reduce such failures. Understanding what causes failure among probationers allows for probation officers to recognize what should be changed to reduce the number of those who fail on supervision. This knowledge establishes what probation officers consider the most common barriers that probationers face; recognizing and reducing these barriers will lead to a greater number of probationers being successful on supervision.

Lastly, the probation officers were asked what improvements they believe could be made to increase the chances of success for individuals on probation. This question allowed for the mention of any programs that are successful that are not widely used, or different conditions that have been shown to be successful that were not discussed during the interview. Understanding what probation officers feel could be done to increase the success rates of probationers is important because this provides first-hand knowledge of ways that probation programs can improve.

Responses from the officers will be used to test whether what research describes as effective practice corresponds to typical probation practice and beliefs. Officers will provide the “hands on” perspective of what programs and treatments are the most effective for probationers. Recent programs that are used that probation officers are expected to describe as contributing to success include cognitive-behavioral therapies, focusing on increasing social bonds of individuals, as well as ensuring that all programs offered to the probationers are evidence-based.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Goals of Probation

Understanding what probation officers view as their goal of probation is essential to determine what they are attempting to achieve through supervision. Responses supported the hypothesis that officers would face conflicting goals between law enforcement and rehabilitation. When describing the goal of probation, four of 11 officers mentioned an individual completing supervision, or avoiding recidivism. Another four responded that the most important goal was public safety. Three respondents indicated that probation has a dual goal of public safety and assisting offenders.

Responses describing success for probationers included completing their term of probation, avoiding recidivism, rehabilitation, changing harmful behaviors, and becoming law-abiding citizens. One officer mentioned that the goal for a probation officer is whatever the individual offender considers to be a goal. Another responded that among the goals should be providing individuals the opportunity to better themselves before trying to restrict behaviors. One interviewee stated that “ultimately the goal of probation varies on the individual.” Another responded that, “I believe there are two-- first the goal is to help the individual be successful with their conditions. Second, is community safety—there must be a constant balance between the two.”

Table 4: *Goals of Probation*

Response Category	Number of Responses
Completing Probation/ Avoiding Recidivism	4 (36%)
Public Safety	4 (36%)
Dual Goal of Public Safety & Assisting Offenders	3 (27%)

Since its origination with John Augustus, the objective of probation has varied between a law enforcement and rehabilitative model. Based on this, as well as variations in beliefs of what leads to success, it was expected that officers would provide varying explanations of the goal of probation, with responses including safety/security and treatment/rehabilitation. Officers mentioned programs and approaches of probation that included both aspects of law enforcement and protecting the community, as well as assisting probationers with rehabilitation and improving their situation. Responses concerning the goal of probation from the officers depended on their personal views of which aspect is most important; reporting various views was consistent with research as well as the hypothesis.

Next, the officers were asked how they believe the goals of community safety and security are balanced with rehabilitation and treatment of the offender. Although every officer had a slightly different view on how this balance was achieved, almost all responded that their organization did a good job of balancing these goals. Various responses indicated that the balance is different for each individual and that theoretically the goal is to have an equal balance. Five of nine respondents emphasized that, although rehabilitation is very important, that safety is the priority. One officer placed treatment as

being put first. According to three respondents, there is an equal balance between the goals of community safety/security and rehabilitation. One officer mentioned that there needs to be a “unique collaboration,” while another stated that “it is a constant balance, I cannot say one is more important.”

5.2 Programs and Approaches

A wide range of programs and approaches are available to assist probationers through supervision; many different programs were mentioned throughout the interviews as contributing to success based on the experiences of the probation officers. Among the most common mentioned were programs to assist with employment, education/obtaining a GED, substance abuse treatment, drug treatment, mental health treatment, domestic violence, motivational interviewing, and cognitive-behavioral therapies.

When asked to describe the most common programs or approaches used that contribute to success of probation, employment and mental health programs, cited by half 12 respondents, topped the list. Substance abuse treatment and cognitive-behavioral therapies, mentioned by five respondents, were the next common programs. A few specific programs mentioned that are considered cognitive-behavioral therapies include life skills, adult cog-talk, and motivational interviewing.

One officer mentioned Second Chance Act Funding, which provides job training as well as funding for bus fares, business suits, or other necessities that would assist with gaining employment. Education and/or obtaining a GED and domestic violence programs were described as essential in four of the officers’ responses. Other programs, mentioned by three respondents were drug treatment and motivational interviewing.

Home confinement was mentioned in two responses and housing and community service in one.

Contrary to the common responses, one officer stated that programs most often contributing to success do not include alcohol and drug treatment. The officer explained that these programs lead to a “constant struggle” for individuals and actually hold them back from succeeding. The officer explained that the most successful programs require the individual to work because making money is an incentive. The downside is that due to a lack of funding, these programs are not widely available.

Table 5: *Most Common Programs/Approaches Contributing to Success*

Response Category	Number of Mentions
Employment	6 (50%)
Mental Health	6 (50%)
Substance Abuse	5 (42%)
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies	5 (42%)
Education/ Obtain GED	4 (33%)
Domestic Violence	4 (33%)
Drug Treatment	3 (25%)
Motivational Interviewing	3 (25%)
Home Confinement	2 (17%)
Housing	1 (8%)
Community Service	1 (8%)

Determining whether an individual on probation is successful is difficult because success varies with every individual. Defining success is complicated because success varies not only by probationers, but probation officers also have different views of what should be considered as success. When officers were asked how they would define success, many were hesitant, and explained that trying to provide one specific definition of success is complicated.

Probation officers described success for individuals on probation in many different ways. The most common responses include not reoffending or recidivating, as well as no new arrest or crime, which were mentioned in nine of 11 responses. One officer explained how defining success can be challenging depending on whether the focus is on success for a probation officer or for a probationer; for example probation officers may be considered successful if they violate an individual because this prevents future crime from occurring. The officer is therefore completing the job of protecting the community, but on the other hand the probationer is unsuccessful due to receiving a violation.

Mentioned in six of 11 responses was that individuals should be considered successful if they better themselves or make positive changes and improvements in their life. Examples given include making progress on personal issues such as a drug or alcohol addiction. Three of the officers emphasized that success is dependent upon the probationer's mindset and seeing themselves as being able to be successful. One officer stated that individuals should be recognized as successful whenever positive improvements are made in their life despite facing many challenges. Another response indicated that an individual is successful if they change their mindset and are "willing to make a change."

Table 6: *Officer Perceptions of what Leads to Successful Probation*

Response Category	Number of Responses
Positive Change	6 (54%)
Self Concept	3 (27%)
Other	2 (18%)

Officers were asked what the most typical treatments are that probationers receive. The most common condition mentioned was substance abuse treatment, which was noted by nine out of 11 officers. Drug and mental health treatment were the next most common conditions, both being mentioned by seven of the officers. The large number of officers mentioning substance abuse and/or treatment shows the reliance on these programs and conditions for probationers to be successful. Anger management was mentioned by four of the officers, which includes the use of domestic violence programs. The next most common conditions included requiring the individual to obtain employment, mentioned by three officers; least common was employment, mentioned by one officer.

Table 7: *Most Typical Conditions Used**

Response Category	Number of Mentions
Substance Abuse Treatment	9 (82%)
Drug Treatment	7 (64%)
Mental Health	7 (64%)
Anger Management (Domestic Violence)	4 (36%)
Employment	3 (27%)
Education	1 (9%)

*Excludes Mandatory Conditions

5.3 Factors Contributing to Success

After determining the most common conditions and treatments required, the officers were asked what factors lead to success of the probationers; this question resulted in a wide range of responses. Six of 11 officers responded that a huge factor that contributed to success of probationers was intrinsic motivation, or the attitude to want to work towards change. One of these officers went on to describe that an individual

“showing up” and “working at things” is a factor that largely contributes to success; an individual needs to have the desire to change to have the drive to complete the necessary steps to be successful on supervision. Another officer mentioned that many probationers know that they want to change but do not know how or do not believe that they can be successful. This is where the probation officer should be able to provide the probationer with the support or the resources needed to assist with success.

Other factors identified included education, mentioned by four officers. Three officers stated maintaining employment, and two included having a healthy mentor, family support, and resources. Two respondents emphasized that the way a probation officer treats the probationer and probation officer integrity both influence success; one of these officers went on to emphasize that officers should treat probationers with respect and acknowledge that they are not bad people, they just made a bad decision. One officer described that remaining alcohol free is essential, and another mentioned that success may require a change in environment. Lastly, family criminal history, history of mental illness, and chemical dependency were described by one officer as influencing chances of success for probationers.

Table 8: *Factors that Contribute to Success*

Response Category	Number of Mentions
Internal motivation	6 (55%)
Completing education	4 (36%)
Ability to maintain employment	3 (28%)
Integrity of probation officer	2 (18%)
Healthy mentor	2 (18%)
Family support	2 (18%)
Resources	2 (18%)
Remain alcohol free	1 (9%)
Change in environment	1 (9%)
Family criminal history	1 (9%)

When asked what social bonds were essential for an individual to be successful, family was included by six of 10 officers. Family members such as children or a spouse provide probationers with motivation because they want to improve their circumstances for these important people. Two of the officers emphasized that support must come from a positive source who will not attempt to influence the individual to participate in criminal or unconventional activities.

Officers explained that when individuals have families and friends who are also on probation and/or who consistently participate in criminal activities these connections may actually create additional obstacles for the probationer. Therefore, social bonds that contribute to the success of probation come from law-abiding citizens. Other social bonds that were mentioned include faith-based organizations and support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Employment, clubs and organizations, or having a hobby were also mentioned as positively influencing success.

Caseload size is another external factor that is often described as impacting the success of probationers. When asked about caseload size, a large majority, or eight out of 10 officers responded that affirmatively that caseload impacts success of probationers. Two of the officers replied that they “suspect so,” or that it could be a factor, while another responded that it comes down to the probationer and, therefore, caseload might affect success. One officer explained that “caseloads are too high and impact the officer’s efficiency and quality of service; the large numbers reduce time with each individual which makes it tough to establish a relationship.”

Officers were often asked to elaborate on their response to obtain more information than a simple yes or no answer. They were asked their current caseload, as

well as what they believed would be an optimal caseload. The size of the caseload depended on the type of officer; officers with a high risk or intensive supervision caseload are responsible for supervising fewer individuals. Due to the variety of officers interviewed, responses for this question were inconsistent. Although the size of the caseloads varied, only one of the 10 officers' responses for optimal caseload was consistent with their current caseload. Consistently mentioned was that an optimal caseload would be lower than the number of individuals that they or the average officer are currently supervising.

High caseloads leave minimal time for an officer to spend with each individual. This makes it challenging to provide desired programs to individuals due to time constraints and limited resources. One response emphasized that caseload size "absolutely" affects the success of individuals on probation, and that officers cannot provide sufficient attention to rehabilitation but instead are constantly performing "damage control." This shows that officers acknowledge the importance of offering rehabilitation programs but that these are often forced to take a backseat to law enforcement to ensure public safety.

One officer explained that, although officers' caseloads are too high, it could not be determined whether this directly impacts recidivism because ultimately it comes down to the probation officer. Results may be misleading because officers with higher caseloads may have more probationers receiving violations. This would make it seem that low caseload does not improve success; in actuality, the officers are spending more time with each individual and therefore find more violations that would otherwise be missed if less time was spent with each individual.

Officers were then asked whether their office uses a risk and needs assessment and how accurate this tool is in determining what conditions an individual should receive. Officers mentioned that the pre-sentencing officers make the recommendations based on this risk and needs assessment. When this assessment is conducted the officers consider the individual's history of education, employment, mental and physical health, drug and substance abuse, as well as criminal history.

Although risk and needs assessments are widely relied upon, some officers described disadvantages with these assessments. One officer described the assessment as "very flawed," while another commented that "it can be subjective." A pre-sentencing officer responded that the assessment is conducted by asking individuals a long list of questions, which often allows them to respond with answers they believe the officer wants to hear. At the time of the interviews, both probation departments were in the process of changing to a new assessment tool. When asked, none of the officers knew any details about the new assessments because the interviews were conducted before they previewed the new tool.

Throughout the interviews, officers mentioned the use of cognitive-behavioral therapy programs in responses to numerous questions. One officer mentioned that most, if not all programs and approaches are based on cognitive-behavior principles, officers just do not realize it. Among the different programs that were mentioned include Lifeskills, Adult CogTalk, and Thinking for a Change or T4C. Both Lifeskills and T4C were described in more detail as addressing decision making by helping the probationers learn how to make better decisions; these programs help probationers understand the impact of their actions and how to avoid making decisions that will lead to criminal or

unconventional behaviors. These programs are strength-based and emphasize the idea that if individuals change their thought process it will influence their behavior.

When asked about the cognitive-behavioral therapy programs, specific examples were mentioned by four officers. Five of 12 officers responded that they were not aware of any of these programs being used, or asked to skip the question. One officer mentioned that individuals are referred out to other agencies. Two officers commented that everything they do is in a way behavioral modifying; they explained that because most of the programs used address cognitive-behaviors, the officers use cognitive-behavioral therapies but are just unaware of the technical categorization of them as such.

Another popular approach used to guide treatments and programs is evidence-based practices (EBP). When asked whether or not officers use EBP and what kind, two of nine officers mentioned cognitive-behavioral therapies, three mentioned employment training, and one stated substance abuse treatment. As with CBT programs, it was mentioned that everything done is evidence-based and “we do it, but we just do not realize it.” Another officer replied that only programs shown to be effective will be certified, and therefore every program and treatment used is evidence-based.

To establish what factors lead to success of probationers it is also important to understand the common causes of failure. Three of nine officers mentioned that often individuals fail on probation because of an unwillingness to change. Other reasons for failure included two mentions of substance addiction or relapsing with alcohol or drugs. One officer observed that individuals are likely to fail if they feel like no one believes in them or if they are lacking resources. It was also mentioned was that a history of being unsuccessful on probation significantly predicts whether an individual will be successful.

The last question was what improvements the officers felt should be made to increase the success rate of individuals on probation. The majority, or nine of 11 officers, commented that having manageable caseloads, more resources, as well as more probation officers would improve the chances of success for probationers. One officer indicated that having a lower caseload would allow for an increase in rehabilitative programming such as lifestyle and job training.

One officer responded that mandating third-party meetings with family members of the probationer would be beneficial and contribute to success. The officer explained how beneficial it is to establish a relationship with the families of the probationers; this allows the officers to ask for feedback concerning progress while gaining insight into what treatments and conditions they believe would benefit the probationer. Also, if the officer has a relationship with individuals close to the probationer, these individuals would be more likely to help the officer and cooperate with house visits. Usually people assume that officers are just trying to lock the probationer up; if they believe the officer is there to help, this relationship will be very beneficial.

Table 9: *Improvements that Could be Made to Probation*

Response Category	Number of Responses
Manageable Caseloads/ More Resources and/or Probation Officers	9 (82%)
Increase Rehabilitation Programs (made possible by lower caseloads)	1 (9%)
Third Party Meetings with Families	1 (9%)

Varying responses from officers supported the hypothesis that determining what contributes to success is extremely complicated. Although it is complicated, through the responses provided from the officers, trends were established determining specific programs, treatments, and approaches that contribute to greater chances of success. Organizational differences were observed in the everyday use of probation. The knowledge provided allowed for conclusions to be made concerning what contributes to success of probation.

The most noticeable differences between the organizations were concerning caseload as well as the use of cognitive-behavioral therapies and evidence-based practices. Officers at the county level were more likely to describe their caseload as “too high” and that an optimal caseload would be less than their current caseload. Officers at the county level also consistently mentioned that additional resources would be beneficial in contributing to success of probationers.

Federal officers were more likely to emphasize the use of cognitive-behavioral programs and evidence-based practices. These officers explained how they have a specific officer who specialized in evidence-based practices and therefore ensures that the office is providing programs that will contribute to the greatest chance of success. Officers at the county level were less aware of these types of programs and one officer mentioned that they use both evidence-based practices and cognitive-behavioral programs but that the officers are just not aware of their categorization as such.

6. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Overall, the interviews made it apparent how difficult it is to determine exactly what leads to success of an individual on probation. There are countless factors that influence an individual's success, which is why it is important to gain first-hand knowledge of what probation officers find contributes to success. Responses given provide an understanding of the probation officers' view of how supervision works and whether trends in everyday probation are consistent with what research has shown to be effective.

The hypothesis that the officers would experience conflict between the goals of rehabilitation and law enforcement was supported by the interviews. Theoretically, officers emphasized programs and treatments that were based on a rehabilitative model. Although this was the case, due to these conflicting goals as well as scarce resources, officers tended to default towards law enforcement to ensure community safety. One officer explained that the goal is to provide rehabilitative programs, but due to the high caseload and lack of resources officers often have to perform "damage control." This showed that probation officers believe the goal of probation should be rehabilitative, but due to circumstances officers are forced to supervise under a more law enforcement-specific model.

Throughout responses from the probation officers, there were different trends that became apparent of the goals and use of everyday probation. Many of the officers believed that to be successful it comes down to the probationers' intrinsic motivation, or having the desire to improve their situation. Numerous officers made it clear that they can provide as much assistance as possible, but if probationers are not willing to help

themselves, being successful on supervision will be challenging. It is up to the individual to find the motivation to participate in treatment and abide by its conditions to be successful on probation.

Officers' responses emphasizing intrinsic motivation were not consistent with the hypotheses focused on specific programs and treatments as factors leading to success. Although this observation was not anticipated, it was a common theme in the interviews as it was consistently mentioned by the officers. This shows that officers believe they can provide endless assistance to probationers but that it is essential for the individual to be willing to participate and want to change in order for probation to be successful.

A finding that supported the hypothesis was the difficulty in defining success for probationers; the responses emphasized that success varies by the individual and there is not simple explanation for what leads to success. Different explanations for success included addressing individual issues, having internal motivation, as well as refraining from additional criminal behavior. These explanations for what is successful for probationers vary between the goals of rehabilitation and law enforcement. Officers' responses determining success as achieved through addressing individual issues and increasing internal motivation were consistent with rehabilitation goals of supervision. Success being established through the absence of criminal activities emphasizes the achievement of the law enforcement aspect of probation.

Among the programs that are based upon a rehabilitative model of supervision is the use of cognitive-behavioral therapies. Based on the empirical emphasis on cognitive-behavioral therapies, it was hypothesized that officers would consistently mention these types of programs. Contrary to this hypothesis, when officers were asked about these

types of programs, many mentioned that their office either did not use cognitive-behavioral therapies or that they were not aware of them. With the amount of research concerning the effectiveness of these therapies, it was surprising that more officers were not aware of specific details, as well as that a majority of the programs offered to probationers are focused around these goals.

There was an agency difference noted in the responses concerning cognitive-behavioral therapies. Federal officers were more familiar with these therapies and provided numerous examples of programs offered. The responses from the county officers were not as consistent. Numerous officers asked to skip the question or replied that they were not aware of programs offered. One officer mentioned that all of the programs offered are referred out to other agencies. Another officer responded that everything they do is behavioral modifying, so that even if specific programs are not categorized as cognitive-behavioral, they are nonetheless based upon its main concept.

There could be numerous reasons for the difference in the responses from the officers in the different agencies. One is that more county probation officers than federal officers described their caseload as being higher than desired than federal. Therefore, in response the officers might not have as much time to look into different programs. Also, the county office did not seem to collaborate with the agencies providing treatment, as more services are referred out. They therefore may not be aware of the exact type of programming offered. Another explanation could be funding-based, as the county office does not have the resources to provide these types of programs to probationers.

Through additional training, officers could become educated about the success of cognitive-behavioral therapies and therefore focus on enhancing these types of programs

and approaches. Theoretically, with an increased use of programs addressing individuals' behaviors, there will be an increase in the success of probation. The majority of conditions and treatments were established around the goal of changing an individual's behaviors based on the social learning theory. Consistent with this research, officers mentioned the use of motivational interviewing, as well as other behavioral-changing programs such as Lifeskills as contributing to success for probationers. Although these programs were mentioned, the officers were not aware of their categorization as cognitive-behavioral therapy approaches.

The same trend was found for the use of evidence-based practices; although many officers did not specifically mention the use of EBP, everything that is done with regards to treatment or conditions of the offenders is based on what evidence has shown to be effective. One officer mentioned that everything offered to the probationers must first be approved and therefore everything is evidence-based. Officers might not be aware of the increased use in establishing evidence-based programs due to these programs and treatments being established at a higher bureaucratic level. This shows that, although evidence-based practices are widely used, their importance is not consistently recognized.

Another difference noted between the two departments was that the federal office had an officer who specialized in evidence-based practices, thus revealing a greater emphasis on the use of these programs by the federal government than the county. There might be many explanations for this difference, including the availability of resources. Responses to this question became complicated because, although all of the programs offered through the probation departments are EBP, all of the officers were not aware of their categorization as such.

Research has shown the risk and needs assessment done during the pre-sentencing investigation to be one of the most reliable methods to determine an individual's needs will be while on supervision. Although many probation officers commented that the risk and needs assessment has flaws, they acknowledged that it provides the best way possible to determine what treatments an individual needs while on supervision. These assessments are conducted for every individual to ensure that the probationer is receiving the conditions and treatments necessary to be successful. The goal of the assessment is consistent with the officer's response that determining what leads to success comes down to each individual. Even if the risk and needs assessment tool may be flawed and subjective, the officers still felt it was essential to develop each case plan based on the individual's specific circumstances.

Consistent with the hypothesis, the most effective programs and treatments are determined on an individual basis by their risk and needs, which are determined during the pre-sentencing investigation. Supervision should be individualized based on factors such as criminal history, education and employment history, substance abuse, and mental health among others. Ensuring that all of these factors are taken into consideration when determining the individual's risk and needs and providing the support to address factors is necessary for success.

Officers emphasized that education is important for an individual to be successful. An individual should either be employed or enrolled in school to ensure that individual has attachments to conventional society and is attempting to improve. In regards to what programs and treatments contribute to success of probationers, drug and alcohol treatment, mental health treatment, education, and employment were consistently

mentioned as essential. Officers mentioning these programs emphasize the importance of rehabilitation for success of probationers.

Also mentioned was having a mentor or a positive source of support. These responses supported the hypothesis and emphasized the significance of the social bonding theory-- that having connections to society or individuals increases chances of success. Officers consistently mentioned family and positive role models, which showed how important having social bonds to conventional society and individuals to turn to for assistance is for an individual on probation to be successful. Although these social relationships were mentioned, many officers explained that close connections are only beneficial if they are with law-abiding individuals. For example, if an individual's family participates in criminal activities or abuses drugs, the close relationship will actually be harmful for the probationer. Social bonds are essential provided they include individuals whose influence on the probationer is positive.

The officers' responses emphasizing the importance of a positive relationship with the individuals' families is consistent with the goal of home visits. Officers attempt to meet with probationers in their home setting to get a feel for their living circumstances. The officers also attempt to establish a sense of trust with the family of the probationer. These findings emphasize the importance of social bonds and positive support for the probationer. The importance of social bonds emphasizes both of the goals of probation. Social bonds contributing to less criminal activities being committed by an individual is consistent with the law enforcement model. On the other hand, positive social bonds establish relationships that contribute to individuals improving their life circumstance, which is consistent with rehabilitation.

Another pattern that became apparent was insufficient resources to properly supervise the number of individuals sentenced to probation. This issue was consistently mentioned by the county officers. With both high caseloads and a lack of resources, officers often struggle to adequately supervise every individual. It is difficult to ensure that every individual is receiving the proper rehabilitative programs and treatment necessary to succeed when officers are responsible for such a large number of probationers. Throughout the interviews it became apparent that many officers felt that they were not given adequate resources to provide the type of supervision and treatment they believe would lead to an increase in the numbers of individuals able to succeed on probation.

Officers mentioned that caseloads were much higher than what was recommended. Although research has argued that caseload size should not determine success because it depends on the probation officer, almost every officer mentioned that adding more probation officers and having lower caseloads would improve the chances of success for probationers. Supervising fewer individuals would allow for probation officers to establish better relationships with those they are supervising, as well as ensure that they are abiding by their conditions. Lower caseloads would also provide officers with more time to ensure the treatments probationers are receiving are sufficient to address their needs.

Based on the experience of the probation officers, an increase in the number of probation officers as well as additional resources would contribute to an increased number of individuals able to succeed on probation. Increasing the amount of time an officer can spend with a probationer can ensure that the individual is receiving the proper

treatments. With more probation officers, there would be more time to implement programs such as cognitive-behavioral therapies into everyday supervision that have been shown to lead to success.

The hypothesis that the officers would face conflict between the goals of rehabilitation and law enforcement was supported by the obstacles that officers face with providing treatments due to a lack of resources. Theoretically, officers emphasized programs and treatments that were based on a rehabilitative model. One officer explained that the goal is to provide rehabilitative programs, but due to the high number of caseloads and lack of resources, officers often have to perform “damage control.” This showed that probation officers find the goal of probation to be rehabilitative but due to circumstances, they are forced to supervise under a more law enforcement-based model.

Throughout the interviews it became clear that probationers face many challenges to success. Many probationers do not have the resources necessary to be successful through supervision. Whether they lack education, skills to hold a steady job, or family support, many probationers struggle to complete supervision. It was concluded from the interviews that it is essential for probationers to address underlying issues to be successful. Along with addressing these issues, the expectation was confirmed that there are many different factors that contribute to success of probation.

The responses from the officers emphasized just how complicated determining success of a probationer may be, which makes it even more difficult to achieve. The numerous obstacles that individuals face must first be determined through a risk and needs assessment, and then addressed in order for the individual to be successful on probation. With substance and drug abuse, mental health problems, lack of education,

and unemployment being common obstacles that individuals must overcome to be successful, officers emphasized that an individual must have a great amount of internal motivation and the desire to address these issues.

Although success was described as up to the individuals and their desire to improve their situation, this attitude could be addressed through an increased use of cognitive-behavioral therapies such as motivational interviewing. These programs have been shown to increase the success of individuals, and requiring probation officers to receive training in how to provide them would significantly improve the success of probationers. Increasing the number of probation officers would decrease caseloads and therefore allow more time for officers to receiving training in cognitive-behavioral therapies and new programs that have shown effectiveness in evidence-based practices.

In conclusion, supporting the hypothesis, officers found that a risk and needs assessment is essential to ensure that each individual is receiving the proper treatments. It was established that individualized supervision is essential, and that success depends on the individual's internal motivation. Understanding the obstacles that probationers face, ensuring that they are receiving the proper treatments, and requiring them to follow conditions consistent with their needs is essential for them to be successful on supervision.

The knowledge provided by the probation officers established an understanding of what contributes to success of probationers in everyday use. The officers' responses were consistent with the hypothesis that there would be conflicting goals in the everyday use of probation. An individualized focus is essential to establish which conditions and treatments are necessary for each probationer, and also to assist in success of supervision.

Through the interviews it was determined that factors that contribute to success of probation included an increased focus on transferring the empirical knowledge learned from evidence-based practices into everyday use of probation, as well as balancing the goals of law enforcement and rehabilitation.

Appendices

Appendix A

Information Sheet for Probation Officers

Factors and Programs that Contribute to Successful Completion of Probation

Purpose:

You are being invited to participate in a 30 minute interview, being conducted by Brittany Archambeau a Graduate Student in the Criminal Justice Department at the Rochester Institute of Technology. The purpose of the study is to find out your opinion concerning which individual factors as well as services provided lead to successful completion of probation.

Procedures:

As part of the study, interviews will be conducted which will focus on both individual factors as well as programs that are provided that contribute to success of an individual's term of probation. The interviewer will ask questions concerning the different individual factors as well as programs that your probation office provides that you believe contributes to the success of individuals on probation.

Volunteering for the study:

As a probation officer you are being asked to volunteer for an interview. Participation in the study will include a 30 minute interview and is completely voluntary. During the interview you are free to decline answering any question as well as decline to continue forward with the interview at any time.

Confidentiality:

If you participate in the study, your name will not be associated with any of the responses that are provided. The responses that are given during the interview will be written in a notebook that will not contain your name or any other identifying information. If a response that is given is mentioned in the report a fake name will be used in order for your responses to remain confidential and no identifying information will be included. Mainly being used in the report will be information concerning the probation programs that are discussed as well as the factors that lead to success for probationers. The report will be presented at a public presentation and will be accessible to professors at RIT, as well as any individuals who are interested in reading it.

Risks:

There are not any foreseeable risks from participating in the study.

Benefits:

There is no direct benefit for individuals who participate. Although there aren't any specific individual benefits, the hope is that a better understanding of what leads to success on probation will guide probation programs and treatment of offenders that will lead to a greater percentage of probationers succeeding on supervision.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in the study

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or comments concerning the study please feel free to contact Brittany Archambeau at (585) 355-5135 or baa1649@rit.edu. Or you may contact the Human Subjects Research Associate Director at the Rochester Institute of Technology, Heather Foti at (585) 475-7673 or hmfsrs@rit.edu.

Appendix B

Questions for Interview

Probation Officer's Background:

1. About how many years have you worked as a probation officer?

Ideology of Probation:

1. What is the most important goal of probation?
2. How are security/safety and treatment/rehabilitation balanced in probation? To what extent is this balance established by your organization versus individual officers?

Perceptions of Current Successful Practice:

1. What are different programs or approaches that are used that are seen as contributing to the success of individuals on probation? Can you provide specific examples? How do you define success?
2. What are the most typical treatments or conditions that probationers receive? Can you provide specific examples?
3. What factors or circumstances of individuals do you feel lead to the greatest chance of them being successful on probation? Can you provide examples?
4. What social bonds do you feel are essential for individual's to have in order to be successful on probation? Can you provide specific examples?

Perceptions of workload:

1. Do you feel that caseloads of probation officers impact whether individuals are successful on probation? Can you provide specific examples?
2. What are, in your opinion optimal caseloads? Why?
3. What is an estimate of your current caseload, as well as an average officer's caseload?

Perceptions of risk:

1. How do you determine what treatments or conditions of probation are necessary for a particular individual to receive? Can you walk me through the process?
2. Does your office use a risk-needs assessment tool? How accurate do you believe this program is at determining what treatment or conditions an individual should receive? How does this compare to other programs for probationers?
3. Does your office use any cognitive-behavioral therapy programs? How many? Can you explain how these programs work? Are these seen to lead to the success of the probationer?
4. What is the most common cause for failure among probationers? Can you provide specific examples? What could be done to reduce such failures, if anything?

Perceptions of Evidence-Based Practices:

1. Does your office use evidence-based practices to guide the programs that are offered? Can you provide specific examples?
2. What improvements do you think could be made to probation in order to increase the chance of probationers being successful?

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