The Nature of Offender & Probation/Parole Agent Relationships for Women on Probation & Parole

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Goal: To examine whether style and content of interactions with agents, as reported by both agent and client, predict women's responses to supervision and ultimately their recidivism.

Key Variables Measured

Constructive/Positive relationship
Agent: I encourage _____ to work together with me
Offender: _____ encourages me to work together with him/her
Safe/Trusting relationship
Agent: _____ feels safe enough to be open and honest with me
Offender: I feel safe enough to be open and honest with _____
Controlling/unequal status relationship
Agent: I make unreasonable demands of ___
Offender: _____ makes unreasonable demands of me

- Women offenders who see the same agent agree that some agents are constructive and safe but others are not, but women did not agree with one another on whether the agent was controlling.

- Agents report considerable cross-offender consistency indicating that they perceived that they were similar in their levels of constructive, safe, and controlling behavior across women on their caseload.

> ➤ If an agent generally reports positive interactions with all offenders do their clients in turn agree that the agent generally engages in positive interactions?
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> - o Only modest evidence for safe/trusting relationship: agents who generally reported having safe and trusting relationships with all of her offenders had offenders who on average showed a modest tendency to report having a safe/trusting relationship with her.
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> ➤ If an agent reports having *especially* positive interactions with a particular offender, does that offender report *especially* positive interactions with that agent?
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> - o Strong evidence for positive interactions: If a woman offender reports an especially constructive (or safe or controlling) relationship with her agent then the agent also tended to report an especially constructive (or safe or controlling) relationship with that offender.

Number of Issues Discussed during Supervision and Perceptions of Relationship Style

Offenders reported the number of issues they discussed with their agent during early supervision meetings (e.g., Education, job skills, criminal thinking, money, housing, criminal associates). Number of issues discussed ranged from 0-14 with an average of 6.4 issues.

✓ Agents who on average discussed more issues with their offenders at the initial interview (as reported by the women) were reported (by the women) to have more constructive and safe relationship styles three months later.

✓ If an agent discussed a uniquely high number of issues with a particular woman at the initial interview, then that woman reported a particularly positive (i.e., constructive and safe) relationship with the Agent three months later.

Anxiety after interactions with the Agent

• Agents who reported having a more controlling relationship style with all women on their caseloads tended to oversee women offenders who reported higher average levels of anxiety after supervision interactions

• Agents whose women on average reported more constructive, safer, and less controlling interactions tended to have women offenders who reported lower average levels of anxiety

• An offender with whom the agent reported a particularly constructive, safe, and non-controlling style tended to report particularly lower anxiety after supervision meetings

• An offender who reported that her agent had a particularly constructive, safe, and non-controlling style tended to report particularly lower anxiety after supervision meetings

Questions yet to be addressed

➢ Does the relationship style of the agent (from agent and client perspectives) predict women's outcomes including drug use, violations during supervision, new arrests and convictions?