

Building bridges to the community: the Kirkham Family Connectors (KFC) Prison Programme

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Citation:

HALL, Lauren Jay, BEST, David, OGDEN-WEBB, Clare, DIXON, Jacqui and HESLOP, Rob (2018). Building bridges to the community: the Kirkham Family Connectors (KFC) Prison Programme. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 57 (4), 518-536. [Article]

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Building Bridges to the Community: The Kirkham Family Connectors (KFC) Prison Programme

Abstract

Families represent a form of social capital that can influence effective reintegration depending on the strength of the bond, and the nature of the relationship. An innovative training programme delivered at HMP Kirkham was designed to mobilise the strengths of prisoners, in the period prior to their release, by engaging family members as bridges to community resources and by a shared planning process designed to build stronger bonds between prisoners and their families. The conceptual framework for the Kirkham Family Connectors (KFC) project is based on the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and Assertive Linkage (assisting individuals in engaging with such assets). The project aimed to build prisoner resettlement capital by identifying what each prisoner's skills and strengths were, what enthused and engaged them, and to create partnerships with family members to establish accessible pathways to related resources in the communities they would be returning to on their release.

Evaluation data shows that the programme generated hope and

a sense of partnership among participants and key lessons for a strengths-based intervention to support the prison-community transition. All three of the participating groups - staff, prisoners and families - reported positive engagement and an emerging sense of hope, and group cohesion through shared goals. There is considerable scope for both peer and probation staff delivery of the programme in the future, and for extending the scale and the scope of the project.

Key words

Resettlement; Social Capital; Prison; Families; Desistance;
Recovery

Introduction

Relationships can be a life-changing resource for individuals attempting desistance and recovery journeys (Sampson and Laub, 1993; Weaver, 2014; Ruiu, 2016; Wilson, 2014; Best et al., 2015), and the resulting social capital has the capacity to help bridge the gap from prison to the community (Wolff and Draine, 2004). The resources required by an individual pre-release to support a smooth transition back into the community are vast; numerous barriers are often encountered on the journey to resettlement (Phillips and Lindsay, 2011) and as such a pool of resources increases the likelihood of success. Examples of barriers include limited access to pro-social relationships, unstable accommodation and ill-defined employment pathways (Dickson and Polaschek, 2014). Upon release, 44% of adults in England and Wales will be reconvicted within one year, costing the economy up to thirteen billion pounds per annum (National Audit Office, 2010), in addition to the huge emotional and personal toll not only on prisoners but also on their families and communities. The barriers and stigmatisation experienced by released prisoners are increased for individuals who are also recovering from alcohol and drug addiction. People suffering from alcohol dependence are more likely to experience social rejection and structural disadvantage compared to people who suffer non-substance related mental health problems (Schomerus et al.,

2011), and illicit drug use and alcohol dependence having been ranked as in the top five most stigmatised conditions in the world (WHO, 2001). The need for interventions that support the successful re-entry and reintegration of released prisoners is demonstrated by rates of recidivism and overcrowding (Hunter, Lanza, Lawlor, Dyson, and Gordon., 2016); for ex-prisoners who are also experiencing recovery from addiction, re-entry is potentially twice as difficult, the need even more urgent, and the challenges more obstinate and complex.

Recovery is a process characterised by the development of a recovery identity, resulting in part from an increase in social connectedness and changes in social network composition (Bathish et al, 2017). The research around desistance from offending has also described this as a journey towards social inclusion characterised by identity change, achieved when the ex-offender is fully involved and accepted into the community, and involves a complex interplay of both internal and external change (Healy, 2012; Farrall, Bottoms and Shapland, 2010; Weaver, 2012). As such, recovery from addiction and desistance from crime are both socially mediated processes, requiring social supports that focus on building personal strengths and resources whilst encouraging engagement with the wider community (Pillay, Best and Lubman, 2014).

Improving social connectedness, social bonds and the quality of social group memberships is known to have the capacity to

improve our health and wellbeing and enhance our social identity, to the extent that the process has been labelled the social cure (Sani, 2012; Jetten, Haslam and Haslam, 2012). The recovery movement encourages a paradigm shift away from disease models of treatment towards overall wellbeing, and therefore aligns with the principles of positive criminology and strengths-based approaches (Best and Aston, 2015; Seligman, 2002).

In prison, visits from family or friends provide the opportunity to establish and enhance social support networks and can assist the formation of a pro-social identity (Duwe and Clark, 2012). Former prisoners engaged in relationships that provide them with a meaningful role are more likely to maintain such relationships because of the benefits they experience as a result (Martinez, 2010). For example, in a study of male British prisoners, family relationships were shown to predict positive outcomes around accommodation, alcohol and drug use, coping with resettlement challenges and the quality of post-release family relations (Markson et al, 2015).

Social capital is critical to this approach as it assumes that features of social cohesion and organization e.g. networks, reciprocal norms and trust in others, can facilitate cooperation between citizens for mutual benefit (Kawachi, Kennedy & Wilkinson, 1999). Adler (2002) defined social capital as "the goodwill that is available to individuals or groups. Its source

lies in the structure and content of the actor's social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence and solidarity it makes available to the actor" (2002, 23). In this way, social recovery capital relates to the opportunities and benefits associated with social group memberships and family relationships supportive of recovery, and includes access to diverse resources that may support motivation when faced with personal challenges to recovery (Mawson, Beckwith, Dingle and Lubman, 2015). As Coleman (1988) has argued that structural barriers means that accessing social capital is difficult, particularly for those who are marginalised or excluded, such as prisoners and possibly also extending to their family members. Putnam (2000) has claimed in "Bowling Alone" that it is not the immediate network but friends of friends that help to produce capital, thus encouraging family members to explore strong and weak ties will extend access to community resources and social capital. .

High recidivism rates demonstrate the difficulty faced by prisoners of reintegrating (Hunter et al., 2016); low mutual trust levels between ex-prisoners and pro-social groups can lead to fear of rejection and increased perceptions of stigma, preventing access to socially supportive resources and capital (Niewiadomska and Fell, 2015). Bonds between people who are incarcerated can be destabilised by changing situations, values, expectations or behaviours, and the instability and

change that imprisonment can cause particularly with regards to external familial relationships has the ability to reduce trust and weaken social bonds (Wolff and Draine, 2004). To bridge the gap between prison and the community therefore, relationships and their resources must be consistently supported and mobilised by resettlement programmes to facilitate the growth of a radius of trust (Fukuyama, 2001; Colvin, Cullen and Vander Ven, 2002) that spans beyond the prison walls. There is a need for programmes that bridge the gap between the prison and the community which address barriers and aim to facilitate success for the released prisoner (Hunter et al., 2016). A strengths-based, positive criminology approach is the most appropriate model for this nature of prisoner re-entry programmes, based on the idea of building on existing and generating new social and community capital. The stratification of our social systems leaves the most in need as the most unable to access social capital (Coleman, 1988) or the resources that exist in the community, which is why bridging programmes are so critical in supporting the transition from prison to the community.

Hunter et al. (2016) specifically recommended that prisoner re-entry programmes a) move away from risk-orientated approaches towards strengths-based support; b) coordinate with family and community resources and should facilitate the rebuilding of positive family relationships; and c) should build

flexible and responsive, innovative programmes. The programme also builds on the evidence of existing interventions in that it is consistent with, and fits within, the Good Lives Model theoretical framework which promotes strengths-based approaches in supporting offenders and their efforts to live ‘good lives’ (Ward and Stewart, 2003). In the UK, the Ministry of Justice Farmer Report (Farmer, 2017) argues that not only does enhanced contact with families reduce reoffending rates, increased family contact may help to break inter-generational transmission of offending and imprisonment. It could be argued that programmes that follow these requirements create a form of ‘resettlement capital’; the resources built will be specifically tailored to support prisoner re-entry in a pro-social strengths-based model.

Prison-based programmes that aim to improve the transition back to the community for released prisoners should therefore consider the potential barriers to be faced during the transition, and aim to protect against the negative effects of stigmatisation and exclusion. Access to pro-social networks, social capital and meaningful activities are known to improve wellbeing; decrease the likelihood of recidivism; and support recovery. Rather than viewing individuals through a risk-orientated lens, which in itself can create barriers to overcoming challenges, strengths-based approaches focus on identifying skills and mobilising assets, based on principles of resilience,

transformation, empowerment and civic engagement (Saleeby, 1996). This means resettlement-orientated programmes should build resettlement capital by drawing upon indigenous resources (personal capabilities, supportive families and partners, and access to community resources), while generating a sense of optimism and self-efficacy about the potential for achievement and meaning on release.

Project Aims and Methodology

The overall aim of the Kirkham Family Connectors (KFC) programme is to engage prisoners' family and friends to aid their transition back to the community, through assertively linking the prisoner to productive and meaningful activities and the linked prosocial groups. The Family Connectors programme utilises the existing social capital of friends/family (the 'Community Connectors') of the prisoners that exist outside of the prison, to create bridges. These relationships then provide the basis for the restoration of bonding capital (resources within existing networks of the target individual) and the formation of bridging capital (resources outside the immediate network) and so create a bridge between the prisoner and the community. Prior research has shown that prisoners who had more family contact while in prison tended to have lower rates of recidivism on release, and higher rates of

successful reintegration than individuals who had little or no contact with family members while in prison (Mowen and Visher, 2015). Four key aims were established:

1. Could we generate buy-in from family members, prisoners and staff for the model?
2. Could we get prisoners and their family members to engage in and complete the training programme?
3. Could the project generate meaningful links to community through existing and new assets?
4. Was the evaluation positive and did participants benefit from taking part?

Setting and Sample

HMP Kirkham is an adult male Category D open prison in the North West of England (near Preston), holding over 650 prisoners. The prison has a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration upon release, with numerous programmes and initiatives being developed within, including the 'Bridge to Change' programme developed by the Governor to prepare prisoners for release. As such, the prison has an established commitment to trialling new ideas and promoting reintegration into the community. The sample were recruited from an existing recovery group within the prison, and this process was led by probation staff. They were supported by a programme

champion who was a prisoner and active member of the recovery group, and he helped to encourage participation in the programme amongst prisoners by discussing with them what the programme would entail and what the potential benefits were. The selection criteria were established by probation staff who chose prisoners on the basis that their offences were not likely to make programme participation with family/friends uncomfortable or inappropriate. The integration of probation staff, prisoners, prisoners' families and researchers in creating and running the programme is also a fundamental element of this programme design; integrated support within prison and upon release is integral to enhancing prisoner mental health (National Audit Office, 2017).

Design

The programme design was based on prior work conducted by one of the research team in Australia, with a community connections project undertaken in partnership with the Salvation Army in the Gold Coast area of New South Wales (Best et al, 2015). Until this point, the model has not been trialled within the prison setting. Following discussions with the senior management team, HMP Kirkham was supportive of the proposal to trial the programme. The rationale for this approach is shaped by emerging evidence about how communities can be engaged to support the rehabilitative

efforts of marginalised and excluded groups. Asset-based Community Development (ABCD) is a strategy for community-driven development which has recently become popular in North America. The appeal is that people in communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying/mobilising the community's assets, and ABCD particularly emphasises the role that social capital can play in this development process (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003).

ABCD stems from extensive research into the characteristics of successful, community initiatives by John McKnight and John Kretzmann (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1990). The model refutes the notion that you need external experts to help mend communities, and instead emphasises the existing strengths of the community and focussing on ways of best utilising these strengths (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003). Mapping community assets (part of ABCD methodology) formed an explicit component of the workshop programme.

Procedure

Following meetings with prison staff, the overall design of the training course was six hours of input in the form of three two-hour blocks across a four-week time frame. The three sessions progressed as follows with the intention to achieve a variety of goals and content (this content has been manualised and this manual is available on request).

Session 1: Introduction and Strengths.

In the first session, all participants started by introducing themselves, then the project team overviewed the goals and methods for the course, discussing the evidence-base around the approach and rationale with the group. The aim was then to identify what experiences, skills and interests the prisoners currently have or have ever had in four areas:

- employment, training and education;
- sport, recreation, arts and culture;
- recovery groups, and other forms of peer activity; and
- volunteering and participation in a range of community activities.

This was done in small groups with the prisoner and their family members and resulted in identifying a small set of areas for the family member to explore, and was designed to create a shared set of goals and mission early in the programme. The kinds of activities that were mentioned included: training through charities including C2W; volunteering in park maintenance and with the Wildlife Trust; Open University and Night College; engagement in a boxing gym and in badminton clubs in the local community; body-building clubs and competitions; SMART Recovery groups; Fathers for Justice; and all of the anonymous fellowships.

The last part of the session was a guided session for family members to consider how they would explore:

- a. Connections to these activities through their existing networks; and
- b. Making completely new contacts to explore opportunities in each area of interest.

The programme also required individuals to undertake 'homework' to bring to the following session. The homework at the end of session 1 included:

- To compile a list of contacts linked to the interests that the family member and the prisoner came up with;
- To link those interests to the individuals, groups and organisations in their local area by drawing on their networks and discovering new information about their local communities;
- To create a directory of all of those individuals and groups and to find out a bit more about them via websites, phone numbers and personal inquiries.

Session 2: Development, Community Engagement and Assertive Linkage

This started with a review of the first session, prior to a discussion of how the family members had gone about finding out about opportunities and activities in the areas identified. In this case, all eight of the family teams had explored and come up with at least some options and these were then discussed with the prisoners and reviewed.

The main part of the session explored and taught the method of mapping from the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model (McKnight and Kretzmann, 1990), including the concept of the Community Connector (McKnight and Block, 2010). The teams of family members and participants were asked to come up with lists of activities and groups they were aware of in their local areas and to outline what their links were in terms of making contact with each group. The last part of the session discussed what the key characteristics were for community connectors and how compatible family members saw themselves in this role. The session closed with family members being asked to assertively connect with the groups and activities identified following session 1 (i.e. homework for session three).

Session 3: Becoming a Community Connector

The third and final workshop also started with a review of the 'homework' done by both prisoners and by the family members to explore the options for engaging with each group. The aim was to share experiences about successes and obstacles encountered and to share learning about the challenges of building new connections and re-igniting old ones. This then formed the basis for a resettlement planning session in which action plans were developed in three sections - what could be done by the prisoners now to prepare; what could be done by the family members to build the relationships with external groups; and what the plans were for engagement on release. The session closed with reviews of the process and evaluation of the sessions.

The days when training occurred also enabled those involved to have a visit with their family member, encouraging discussion and support beyond the training (i.e. prisoners did not only see their family members for the training session itself).

Results

The results come primarily from the evaluation forms completed by participants in the sessions, supplemented by feedback from staff and participants. Whilst it was hoped that we would be able to match up individuals' feedback before and after the sessions, the inclusion of family members within the

programme was relatively fluid - different individuals came on different weeks as part of a supportive unit for the individual prisoner - and so this was not possible.

There are three components of data reported in this analysis - the first is a summary of the evaluation data reported by the 13 family members and prisoners who completed the final session. This is supplemented by a qualitative overview (based on content analysis) of the key findings and experiences of the participants (including probation staff), and finally an analysis of some of the comments made in workshops and key co-produced materials emerging from the sessions.

Section 1: Summary of the evaluation data

A total of 13 forms were completed at the end of the final session, 7 by participating prisoners and 6 by family members. Overall, the group consisted of 9 males and four females, and the prisoners ranged in age from 35 to 47 and the family members from 25 to 79, with the latter group including parents, siblings and partners.

There were very high levels of wellbeing reported in the group using scales with ranges of 0-20, where higher scores represent better functioning. For psychological health the mean score was 17.0 (range of 6-20), for physical health the mean was 16.1

(range of 10-20) and for quality of life the mean was 15.8

(range of 10-20).

Overall satisfaction ratings

The Texas Christian University (TCU) Workshop Evaluation (WEVAL) rating scale (TCU, IBR, 2004), which formed part of the evaluation forms distributed, consists of three sections - the first concerning overall satisfaction, the second establishing barriers to implementation and the third to do with beliefs about implementing the training programme.

The three graphs below report on the ratings provided with higher scores on each of the three items (ratings are between 1 and 5) indicating greater endorsement or satisfaction:

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

There was a very strong and consistent level of endorsement with all items eliciting at least 4.5 out of 5. Participants were universally positive about the quality and relevance of the training, about how useful it will be to them and the quality of training and support they received across the three sessions.

Figure 2 below deals with barriers to implementation, with higher scores again indicating the extent to which each item is endorsed:

INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

The results from the above table show the lack of perceived barriers to implementation. With scores of between 1 and 5, with lower scores representing low agreement, it is clear that the participants did not consider lack of time, lack of training or other priorities as barriers to implementing the training package.

The final section of the evaluation questionnaire examined considered perceptions of impact and implementation as shown in Figure 3 below:

INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

As is evident from Figure 3, there is positive endorsement of the impact of the training on participants, who feel better equipped, understand the role of community connectors and who have accessed the relevant resources in the community, and who generally do not feel that it will not work nor that prisoners need better support.

As such, this is a strong and consistent endorsement not only of the training, but also of its perceived efficacy and implementation.

Section 2: Qualitative data

Staff ratings

Staff were provided a series of questions electronically (see below) to be answered using a likert scale rating from strongly agree to strongly disagree. All three probation staff responded with 100% 'strongly agreeing' to all questions, including items indicating endorsement of personal benefit as well as benefit to the prisoners and their families; and a commitment to run the course again with increased engagement and participation.

Staff were also asked three open-ended questions regarding their overall thoughts of the programme; what they thought could be done to improve the programme; and any other comments. Again, feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with no negative comments reported. The programme was described as “excellent... very interesting” and was praised for focusing on “what is important to the prisoners” and was therefore viewed as “more likely to have a positive impact”. The rationale and conceptual framework for the programme was praised by staff; “[The programme had] Excellent theoretical underpinning and the delivery was pitched ideally for the audience.” The structure of the programme including its length and delivery across three workshops was also regarded positively, with the sessions described as “well planned and executed”; “the programme running over three sessions was perfect as it kept the prisoners interested and it was enough for

the relatives in terms of travelling”. Staff iterated that these reviews were echoed by the prisoners from whom they had received “excellent feedback”. Only one problematic issue was reported by staff which followed the completion of the programme, when issues of obtaining extra ROTLs¹ were faced, however such issues were quickly attended to upon being brought to the attention of staff involved with the training programme.

Feedback from Prisoners and Families: Open ended questions from the evaluation forms

Qualitative feedback provided at the end of the programme evaluation questionnaires fell predominantly into two broad themes which concerned a) social capital, and b) the accessible nature of the programme and the perceived benefits and enjoyment of the workshops. Comments that could be thematically categorised under the heading social capital included remarks that were based on the importance of connections with others as fundamental facilitators of wellbeing – with a family connector remarking “you realise how important it is to be in contact with other people”. One comment from another family connector highlights the feeling

¹ Release on Temporary Licence - prison approved time out of the prison to allow for prisoners to engage in job interviews, looking for housing, and other reintegration activities. These are risk-assessed and subject to a process of scrutiny by staff.

of self-worth that family participants felt following their involvement with the programme where they describe feeling “like a small cog in the big picture of someone else's life. Every person counts and has a value.”

The accessible nature of the programme characterised the second key theme that emerged in the evaluation feedback, with workshops described as “well presented”, “very interesting and relevant, but simplified” and “everything said makes sense and if implemented should work.” Perceived benefits and enjoyment of the programme were also documented with delivery described as “engaging” and overall positive feedback such as “I am sure everyone benefited from this session” and “absolutely loved this today”.

Again, no negative remarks or suggestions for the programme were made. In addition, one of the family member participants wrote separately to the project lead to say, "Firstly I would like to thank you and the team for working on such an initiative that helps the rehabilitation for [family member] and reduces the chances of reoffending".

Feedback: Comments made in workshops and co-produced materials

The workshop participants valued the programme content highly as supported by the programme evaluation forms, and comments and feedback were noted throughout the

implementation of each workshop. Following the completion of Workshop 1 tasks, family members remarked that they were surprised at the lack of positive activities the prisoners were engaging with, noting that seeing the differences in activity engagement pre-and post- substance misusing/criminal lifestyles written down had a profound impact on them and increased their eagerness to help improve this. One family member's feedback about the first workshop task was that past and current activity and group involvement told a story of isolation and negativity during addiction which had eliminated positive groups and connections. They also commented on the benefits they felt would result from the programme for them despite describing themselves as older and not a prison inmate, concluding that the programme for them was really about reconnecting with their family member.

Another connector commented that there was a picture painted in discussing past pleasures with family, surprising them with how different life used to be. A prisoner similarly identified that following the completion of the task about things they were good at and had enjoyed in the past, it was easy to see that when the positive activities stopped things got worse for them in terms of their addiction and criminal behaviour.

Regarding the linkage task during which family members contacted potential groups and organisations concerning the possibility of their loved one linking with that group upon their

release, comments were recorded from the majority of friends/family members. One connector described the linking exercise as a method through which the connector acts as a kind of guarantor, as through making contact on their behalf they are being held responsible for the consequent behaviour of their family/friend.

Some connectors described how their honesty with potential groups and organisations about the prisoner was met supportively which came as a surprise due to the stigma they have experienced in the past. Amongst others, groups and organisations that were contacted included painting and decorating businesses; religious organisations; running clubs for the over 40's; food banks; and hospice volunteer work. The rationale behind connecting with each potential group was individual as illustrated by one group whose connector described how the prisoner still needs to deal with the grief of his deceased mother who died in a hospice. The family had no links with the hospice but asked about a potential introduction to the hospice for the prisoner and were told this could be possible. This highlights the importance of the individual tailoring of each task by each family group as this will help to ensure the meaningful nature of the activity and the co-production of linked networks; Weaver (2016) has identified the importance of engaging with and investing in the

community through methods of coproduction as vital to desistance.

The participants all recognised how the programme was intended to benefit them, describing hope, purpose, meaningful activities, and regulation of emotion as potential results of engaging with positive and meaningful networks and activities. This aligns with the CHIME model from the mental health recovery literature (Connectedness; Hope; Identity; Meaning and Empowerment; Leamy et al, 2011) which outlined the key characteristics of successful recovery programmes and interventions. Linked connections – people or groups the family connectors already knew – were described as easier to draw upon than unlinked connections, which demanded more research and social skills, and was seen as a significant challenge for some family members. In order to foster unlinked connections therefore the group were asked what qualities connectors might need to be successful. Responses included:

- Resilience. Confidence. Commitment
- Being open. Patience. Enthusiasm
- Communication skills
- Persistence. Thick-skin
- Organisation
- Learn from success and failures

Similarly, in the final session, all participants were asked to reflect on what skills were needed to be a good connector, as both the prisoners and the family members had done this to some extent. Responses were similar but with some additional elements, including having a clear goal; being in the right place at the right time; showing openness and honesty, as well as transparency. It was felt that connectors needed to have confidence in relationships, and needed to have belief and trust, as well as confidence more generally. Some said that they needed to be able to be persuasive and motivated with a need to succeed, as well as having a clear strategy and knowledge, and self-esteem.

The connectors needed to have hope, passion, honesty and commitment, alongside responsibility and the ability and self-awareness to ask for help. Prisoners on the other hand, were said to require time, effort, confidence, patience and to be thick-skinned: it was acknowledged that, despite many of their positive experiences in the course of their training, this would not always be the case, and that making the most of the connections developed would be a significant challenge.

Resilience was seen to be important, as was belief, knowledge and preparation, not least in terms of how they would manage issues to do with disclosure of their criminal records and prison pasts.

Both sides of the partnership were clear in their acknowledgement that the process would not always be easy, and that they may need to manage this in the future, yet throughout there was a clear commitment from both prisoners and their loved ones about wanting to try to develop community links for when they left the prison. As such, the theoretical background underpinning of the workshops aimed to help to empower the participants in recognising their capabilities in line with strengths-based models, and the responses above and the feedback on the tasks and the homework suggests that this was the case.

Conclusion

This is a pilot programme and as yet we have no data about longer term outcomes of the connections programme but it has high face validity and has demonstrated the relationship building capabilities of a strengths-based project - with improved bonds emerging within the family groups and a genuine sense of cohesion and shared objectives between the broader group of trainers, prisoners, family members and probation staff working on the project. The teams co-produced connections and the process generated a sense of hope and possibility among the participants. There was also an improved sense of possibility about engaging with the community.

Active engagement with the community is not only a strong predictor of recovery (Best and Lubman, 2012) but also of desistance (Farrall, Hunter and Calverley, 2014; McNeil, 2012) – as immersion in pro-social groups and activities increase access to and enhance other social aspects such as social capital and group membership. Programmes for prisoners that help to establish pathways into the community help to create pathways to sustainable recovery and desistance. By establishing such pathways pre-release this should predict stronger chances of successful re-entry and wellbeing, and we will test this in future iterations of the project. The programme was seen to have positive benefits (at least in the short term) for prisoners; their family units who engaged with the project; and prison staff who took part in the sessions. It is entirely consistent with the recommendations of the Farmer Review (Farmer, 2017) and provides not only a mechanism for increased family contact but one that builds hope and partnership and provides a clear role for family members in supporting rehabilitation and reintegration in the community.

Linked by the bridging capital co-produced between family connectors and prisoners, the prisoner will be able to plane their pathway back into the community practically and realistically, providing them with a role and sense of purpose, that is supported and under-written by the connector.

Connectors were also able to access an enhanced sense of

purpose through having a role that gives them a part to play in reintegration and that can help to build their own positive networks and connections. Participants listed existing skills and interests, identified and mapped assets through the help of their visitors externally, and made initial contact through their connectors. The prison's recovery community was mobilised through their existing social capital and in doing so bridging capital and bonding capital were created (Gitell and Vidal, 1998; Putnam, 2000), extending the radius of trust (Fukuyama, 2001) beyond the prison community, arguably producing a form of resettlement capital. Examples of the resources that should be amassed when aiming to build resettlement capital should therefore include the enhancement and mobilisation of social and community capital; the design of pathways to desistance that are flexible and evidence-based; and encourage engagement with meaningful and empowering activities, instilling a sense of hope. In other words, resettlement capital embodies the same ethics and rationale as recovery capital, but is specifically relevant to prisoners soon due to be released due to the difficulties that can be faced regarding the creation of therapeutic approaches in a prison setting.

It has been noted previously in the literature that there are significant concerns with the idea of involving family members in the transition from prison to the community (Codd, 2007) - partly because it may be seen to take responsibility for

resettlement from the state, but also because this burden will also predominantly fall on women who are already disenfranchised. This is particularly the case when family members themselves may lack appropriate supports (Comfort, 2003). As Comfort (2016) concluded, the cyclical re-entry of offenders into prison can significantly deplete the resources of families and assertively engaging their involvement may exact a significant emotional toll, for which little support is afforded. These are key cautionary notes, but it is also important to recognise that one of the explicit aims of the programme is to strengthen the bonds with family members while another is to increase the connections available to family members in their own right.

The enthusiastic engagement of probation and prison staff, the Kirkham Family Connectors champion, and of the participants with the programme rationale and content was an essential contributing factor to the reported success of the programme and it is hoped that this enthusiasm will encourage participants to take part in training and assume the roles of running the workshops. The theme of hope that emerged in the programme was particularly evident among the staff who were involved who witnessed and contributed to the collective sense of purpose and active engagement of both the prisoners and the family members.

In line with the evidence-base on the importance of meaningful activities to desistance and recovery, the activity or role pursued by the prisoner must have potential for self-improvement beyond a desistance-based focus (Martinez, 2010), and this was encouraged during the workshops as a broad suggestion of potential categories of activities and networks were provided. The engagement and enthusiasm of the prisoners, family and staff co-produced a strong sense of group cohesion and the evaluation reflects how positively the programme was received.

The incorporation of the connectors into the programme also helped to ensure this variety. It should be noted that the programme was only run with a small number of participants and is unusual in its open prison status setting. Safety and security procedures to do with prison visitation policies may restrict or limit the transferability of this programme to other higher security prisons, and so it is recommended that this programme be trialled first in other prison settings. The enthusiastic nature of the prison staff and prisoners was a fundamental contributing factor towards the successful reception of the programme and this is a finding supported by existing research on professionals' attitudes towards recovery (Pillay, Best and Lubman, 2014).

There are limitations in scope and scale with participants carefully screened by probation staff both for risk and in terms

of their motivation and commitment to engage their families. These criteria will have to be relaxed to improve the generalisability of the programme. Should this programme be trialled in other prison environments, it should be important to ensure the staff and prisoners are fully informed and comfortable with the Family Connectors programme rationale. While there are plans to conduct a booster session for participants that will explore the roll-out, clear outcome assessment will be needed to test the impact of the programme on prisoner resettlement capital. It is anticipated that this programme could therefore encourage the adoption of a desistance-orientated identity and support the growth of hope for a positive future for both parties, by creating links that will enhance the likelihood of effective community reintegration on release. Next steps therefore include further research into the impact of the programme, with phase 2 being rolled out with a new group of prisoners in November 2017 allowing for the evaluation of the impact of the programme on this second group. Further, there is a need to augment the current evaluation beyond the field notes and structured instruments, to better measure the processes and outcomes of the programme. This will include a measure of group cohesion and analysis and presentation of the asset maps produced in the training sessions. In terms of realistically ensuring the future implementation of the programme, local leadership is essential according to the

principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD), and in terms of encouraging the citizenship values that are also important to ABCD it is hoped that the delivery of future workshops could be given by trained prison/probation staff or even Family Connector Programme Champions; nurturing social assets and supporting natural leaders (Mathie and Cunningham, 2003; Schmitz, 2012). From a practical perspective, this approach should sustain the possibility of future implementations of the programme with minimal costs. This approach could then increase the scope for the programme to be rolled out to other prisons.

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Figure 1: Overall training satisfaction

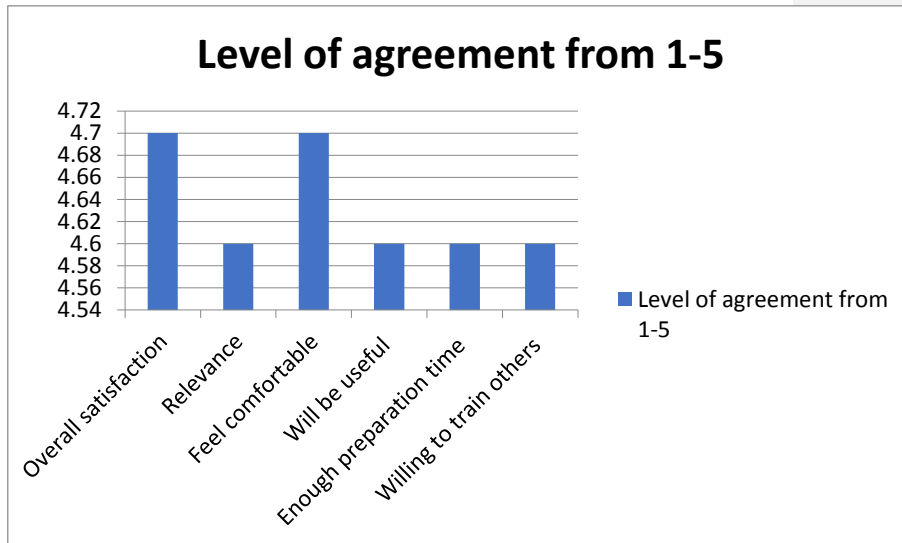


Figure 2: Perceived barriers to implementation

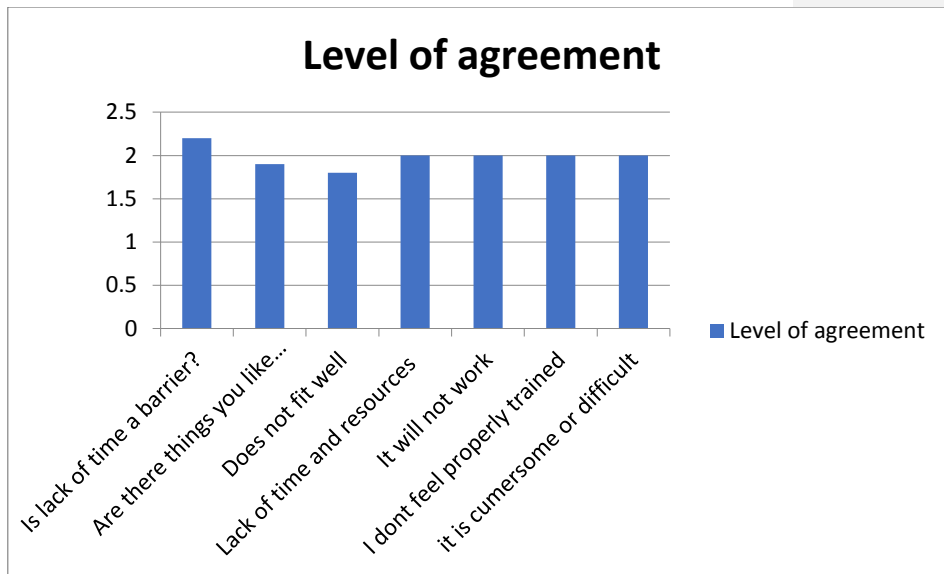


Figure 3: Implementation factors

