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<b>Document Title:</b>	<b>Roads Diverge: Long-Term Patterns of Relapse, Recidivism, and Desistance for a Cohort of Drug Involved Offenders</b>
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<b>Document Number:</b>	<b>250656</b>
<b>Date Received:</b>	<b>July 2020</b>
<b>Award Number:</b>	<b>2008-IJ-CX-0017</b>

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June 2013

# ROADS DIVERGE: LONG-TERM PATTERNS OF RELAPSE, RECIDIVISM, AND DESISTANCE FOR A COHORT OF DRUG INVOLVED OFFENDERS



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was supported by grant number 2008-IJ-CX-0017 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

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We wish to thank Linda Truitt for her meticulous guidance on this project. Not only did she make sure the trains were running on time, but she encouraged us to seek guidance from others who had conducted similar projects and/or who had used the various methods we employed herein. One of those she insisted we contact was Dana Hunt at Aby Associates who was a phenomenal resource regarding interviews with offenders generally and event history calendars specifically. We also want to thank Peggy Giordano who encouraged us to pursue this project and graciously sent us the interview guides used in their groundbreaking research with Ohio youth. We also want to acknowledge the invaluable guidance of Christy Visser, Director of the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies (CDAS) and Steve Martin, Senior Scientist at CDAS, for their invaluable guidance throughout the project. In addition, we want to thank our field staff extraordinaire who worked tirelessly tracking down respondents, conducting interviews, and spent countless hours trouble shooting throughout the project: Grant Bacon, Ron Beard, and Judi Buchanan, you are remarkable researchers! Kristee Copley and Lionel Smith also performed a Herculean effort at helping us code interviews, especially during the final push at the end when it took 10 times longer than expected. And finally, we extend our most sincere gratitude to the men and women we interviewed; any wisdom illuminated in this work comes from them.

## ABSTRACT

### PURPOSE

Research indicates that a large percentage of inmates released from prison back into their communities will be rearrested. Particularly vulnerable are those who have past histories of drug addiction. Except for intensive experiences with long term aftercare programming, there appears to be very few programs that significantly increase the probability of (re)integrative success for ex-offenders attempting to become conforming members of society. Other evaluation studies examining the efficacy of particular programs in reducing recidivism and drug use (NIDA, 2012, Pendergast, 2009) have been promising, however, we still know very little about the underlying mechanisms that produce change in offending patterns. Unlike evaluation studies examining the efficacy of particular programs, the primary goal of this project was to increase our understanding about the mechanisms and processes of desistance from crime and drug use among current urban, largely minority and increasingly female criminal offenders. Using a mixed methods research design, this research follows former drug-involved offenders for over 20 years post release from prison. The project was guided by Paternoster and Bushway's identity theory of desistance (2009), which relies on the concept of identity that is theorized to provide direction for an individual's behavior. The identity theory of desistance emphasizes the individual identity as reflexive, interpretive, and as such, premised on human agency.

### METHODS

The project features a multi-method design and unfolded in two phases. The sample for this study originated from a previous sample used to evaluate the efficacy of Therapeutic Communities (TC) in reducing recidivism and relapse for drug involved offenders in 1989. In Phase I of the present study, official arrest records were obtained for the original 1,250 offenders through 2008 from both official Delaware and NCIC data sources. From these data, race and gender specific offending trajectory models were estimated. In Phase II used the trajectories as a sampling frame to select 304 respondents for in-depth interviews. The goal of the interviews was to examine the processes and mechanisms that led to persistence or desistance from crime and drugs.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

The NCIC data uncovered an average of 2 more arrests for cohort members compared to the Delaware data. However, the trajectory models that resulted from both sources of arrest data were essentially the same, with trajectory group membership across both data sources identical in over 95% of the cases. For the total sample, a five trajectory group model fit the data best, with three groups differentially increasing their rate of offending and then leveling off to near zero, and an additional two groups increasing at different rates but remaining more criminally active throughout the time period compared to the desisting groups.

Supporting the identity theory of desistance, interviews revealed that the vast majority of offenders who had successfully desisted from both crime and drug use first transformed their “offender identity” into a “non-offender working identity.” This was true for both race and gender groups interviewed. This cognitive process was typically motivated by respondents realizing that if change did not occur, they would likely become what they feared, either dying an addict, dying in prison, dying alone, or some other horrible fate. To behaviorally conform to their new “non-offender” identity, respondents used various tools including changing their “people and places” by seeking out noncriminal ties and staying away from locations that triggered their drug use or criminal behavior. Although treatment usually did not result in immediate desistance for most, the vast majority who eventually “got clean” relied on the tools learned in treatment programs when they were ready to use them. Religion also was cited as a tool by many that was used to establish pro-social support networks that reinforced their new identities.

Contrary to life-course theory, partnership and parenthood did not appear to be “turning points” for the majority of our respondents. However, when they were ready to get clean, rekindling relationships with adult children or grandchildren was an extremely important factor for many of our respondents. Similarly, while getting a good job upon release did not deter the majority of addicts from relapse upon release from prison, it is clear that finding stable employment that paid a living wage is extremely difficult for this sample of drug involved offenders and that deciding to get clean and/or maintaining a “non-offender” identity is more difficult when access to a meaningful quality of employment is beyond reach or nonexistent.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESESARCH

As with all research, this study is not without several limitations. Although we utilized a random selection method to obtain the sample for in-depth interviews, we cannot assume that the resulting sample was without selection bias. Sample generalizability of both Phase I and Phase II of the research is also an issues. The extent to which the findings based on this sample can be generalized to all drug-involved offenders is not known. However, we believe the large sample size that was representative of the five different trajectories of desistance ameliorate the compromises to sample generalizability. Another limitation with the qualitative component of this research is “authenticity.” It is not improbable that some respondents may have been untruthful, particularly about such things as their recent criminal involvement or substance use. In addition, we cannot assume the findings here are representative of other groups including Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, or others.

While certainly not definitive, our findings regarding the identity theory of desistance are promising. Our research, and that of Maruna (2001) and Giordano and colleagues (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph, 2002), strongly suggests among drug-involved offenders who live during a period of economic contraction that the turning points identified by Sampson and Laub may not be either available or successful in leading offenders away from crime. There is a great deal of work left to be done, however. One of the most pressing issues is the causal ordering of identity and other cognitive variables and structural factors like marriages, jobs, and children. What is clear is that the belief that only jobs and marriages will lead offenders to desist is too simplistic. Additional research is also needed that includes other subgroups of the population (e.g. juveniles, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, Latinos) to determine whether the mechanisms of desistance described here are similar.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

In the U.S. today, over 7 million people are under some form of correctional supervision. Except for those under sentences of death or life without the possibility of parole, the majority of these individuals will be returning to their communities. Research indicates that a large percentage of these returning inmates will be rearrested. Particularly vulnerable to this revolving prison door pattern are those who have histories of drug addiction. Except for intensive experiences with long term aftercare programming, there appears to be very few programs that significantly increase the probability of (re)integrative success for ex-offenders attempting to become conforming members of society. Other evaluation studies examining the efficacy of particular programs in reducing recidivism and drug use (NIDA, 2012, Pendergast, 2009) have been promising, however, we still know very little about the underlying mechanisms that produce change in offending patterns. Unlike evaluation studies examining the efficacy of particular programs, the primary goal of this project was to increase our understanding about the mechanisms and processes of desistance from crime and drug use among current urban, largely minority and increasingly female criminal offenders. Using a mixed methods research design, this research follows former drug-involved offenders for over 20 years post release from prison.

There has been much theoretical speculation about the factors related to desistance from crime. One of the most noteworthy attempts to understand desistance was conducted by Sampson and Laub (Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 1993), who followed a sample of white males who were heavily involved in delinquency in the 1950s. They found that boys who successfully found stable employment, satisfying marriages, and those who took advantage of the GI Bill were more likely to desist from crime than boys who were less successful in forging social bonds later in life. However, what was true for white males entering adulthood in the 1950s many not apply to minorities, females, different historical periods, and under different social and economic conditions. A large percent of offenders today have histories of drug addiction and face an economic climate virtually devoid of jobs in the industrial and manufacturing sectors that pay a living wage. In fact, offenders coming out of prison today are lucky to

find employment with a temporary employment agency or a fast food restaurant; most are unable to make a decent wage or be eligible for health benefits, much less a pension plan.

There have been a few recent attempts to advance our theoretical understanding of the desistance process for more contemporary samples of offenders. Giordano and her colleagues (2002, 2007) studied a sample of formerly incarcerated delinquents 10 years after release who resided in a rust-belt city (Toledo, Ohio) in 1995. Contrary to Sampson and Laub, they found that marital attachment and job stability were related to desistance for only a very small subset of the sample only. The majority of their sample was unsuccessful at finding stable employment or a stable marriage, regardless of race and gender. Importantly, additional gender-specific pathways to desistance were revealed for women, such as having a child. Based on their results, Giordano and her colleagues (2002) advanced a theory of desistance that emphasized cognitive transformations, religious discoveries, and emotions in the desistance process rather than the more structural factors identified by Sampson and Laub. Giordano et al.'s model of desistance emphasized the “up front” social psychological changes that ex-offenders must undergo *before* there are ready to take advantage of opportunities like jobs and conventional relationships.

Criminal offenders who also have histories of drug addiction are particularly unlikely to establish strong social bonds upon release in the form of good jobs or stable partnerships because they are likely to have isolated themselves from the very social relationships necessary to secure these types of bonds. The primary goal of this project was to increase our understanding about the process of desistance from crime and drug use among current urban, largely minority and increasingly female criminal offenders. Our work was guided by a theory of the desistance process that incorporates the notion of social identity and involves a far more consequential re-thinking of the self than that implied by deterrence theories in general (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Laub & Sampson, 2003) or by the “cognitive transformation” process delineated by Giordano et al. (2002). We appealed to a recent theoretical

formulation by Paternoster and Bushway called the identity theory of desistance (2009), which relies on the concept of identity, which is theorized to provide direction for an individual's behavior (Burke, 1980). The identity theory of desistance emphasizes the individual identity as reflexive, interpretive, and as such, premised on human agency. In their theory, intentional self-change is understood to be more cognitive, internal, and individual, with new social networks approached and mobilized *only after* the emergence of the new, conventional identity. For someone with a current or working identity as a criminal offender or drug user, to begin to consider a conventional, non-criminal possible self in the future, their attachment to the current identity must be weakened. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that the weakening of a criminal identity comes about gradually and as a result of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with crime and a criminal lifestyle. The dissatisfaction with crime is more likely to lead to a conventional possible self when failures or dissatisfactions with many aspects of one's life are linked together and attributed to the criminal identity itself. It is not just that one has experienced failures, but that these diverse kinds of failures become interconnected as part of a coherent whole, which leads the person to feel a more general kind of life dissatisfaction and the expectation that failure is likely to continue in the future. It is this kind of life dissatisfaction that can lead to identity change, or what Kiecolt (1994) has termed intentional self-change.

In the identity theory of desistance, changes in friendship networks and intimate relationship as well as securing alternative jobs and vocations are important because they help maintain or bolster a fledgling changed identity. Importantly, the theory predicts that securing jobs, attracting new marriage partners, and involvement with new friends come about *after* a change in identity has occurred. That is, the change in identity has already occurred in the mind of the person; they have weighed the costs and benefits of the exiting identity and alternatives, and are behaving in ways that conform to the new possible self. The self-regulating component of the possible self contains a specific strategy or way of behaving in order to enact self-change, which includes things like finding a new job, new partner or spouse, new neighborhood, and new friends. While others have viewed such structural supports as the

primary causal factor in producing criminal desistance (Sampson & Laub 1993; Laub & Sampson 2003), this theory views these structural factors primarily as providing support for and maintenance of an already altered identity. They are intervening variables to the antecedent variable of identity change.

Incorporating these theoretical insights from identity theory into Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory of informal social control, the multi-method project conducted here sought to gain a better understanding of how the processes of recidivism and desistance from crime occur among a sample of urban, drug-involved, largely minority male and female criminal offenders who were released from prison over 10 years ago.

## **METHODS**

The project features a multi-method design and unfolded in two phases. The use of mixed methods research for this study was a conscious decision to combine the inherent strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to maximize our understanding of the life-course trajectories of substance abuse and crime for a contemporary cohort of drug using offenders. The sample for this study originated from a previous sample used to evaluate the efficacy of Therapeutic Communities (TC) in reducing recidivism and relapse for drug involved offenders that began in 1989. The original sample was comprised of 1,250 offenders who were originally tracked up to 60 months subsequent to their release from prison. Tracing information was retained for the sample, and subject consent forms left open the possibility that respondents could be re-contacted.

The first phase of the research involved the estimation and analysis of offending trajectories using official arrest records that were obtained for the original 1,250 offenders through 2008 from both official Delaware and NCIC data sources. From these data, race and gender specific offending trajectory models were estimated. Using the estimated trajectories for the total sample as a sampling frame, a stratified random sample by trajectory group, race and gender was selected to take part in in-depth interviews (n=304). The purpose of the interviews was to more fully understand the processes by which respondents either desisted or persisted in substance abuse and crime. As other longitudinal research with offending populations has shown, mortality is a significant problem when attempting to contact members years later.

Approximately 11% of the original sample was deceased, 13% were still incarcerated, 3% were found to be living out of state, and 7% were “unreachable” by any means. The response rate for those who were successfully contacted and living in Delaware was approximately 96%. The final sample characteristics for those interviewed were 61% male, 61% African American, and there was a mean age of 45. All interviews were face-to-face and tape recorded and respondents were given a \$100 for their time and travel expenses. Interviews lasted from 1 to 3 hours with an average of 90 minutes per interview.

The interview guide resembled an event history calendar (EHC), for each year since respondents’ first release from the baseline study (1989 or 1990). The EHC covered several domains including living situation, relationships, employment, substance use and criminal offending, among others. The calendars were pre-coded with official arrest and incarceration data to help facilitate respondents’ recall, which proved extremely useful for cueing respondents and triggering memory recall. The interviews were primarily open-ended and resembled conversations rather than formal questions and answers. The goal was to uncover what Agnew (2006) refers to as “storylines” in understanding criminal offending. A storyline is a “temporally limited, interrelated set of events and conditions that increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in crime” (p. 121). Unlike the criminal event perspective, however, storylines include many factors, from an objective event (e.g. needing money, a major life event involving trauma or loss), to an individual’s perception of these events (e.g. increased strain, thoughts of consequences), the situational characteristics present (e.g. presence of criminal peers, lack of capable guardians) combined with all the other background characteristics such as an individual’s level of self-control, their emotional states, and their stakes in conformity (Agnew 2006).

For each criminal, drug relapse, and prison release event self-reported or obtained from official records, respondents were asked to recreate the event both perceptually and structurally, including information about what his/her life conditions were at the time (e.g. employment, intimate relationships, education, children), how the event transpired, and his/her perceptions of the circumstances (e.g. what they were thinking about themselves, the risks and benefits associated with engaging in crime). Interviewers probed for the cognitive processes that may have been related to a crystallization of discontent as articulated by Paternoster and Bushway (2009). These storylines also illuminated the events and cognitive processes related to desistance from crime and drug use,

including offender's identities – working, feared, possible and pursued.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim into Word and then imported into NVivo for coding. Codes in our scheme ranged from purely descriptive (e.g. narrative describing first arrest or first incarceration) to more interpretive concepts such as reflections of identity change, or a feared self. The coding team included one PI, and three graduate student assistants. The coding process began with a list of initial categories developed from the existing literature on desistance including such key indicators as turning points, indicators of agency and readiness for change, the psychological indicators of discontent and fear. The final coding scheme included over 20 main codes with over 100 sub-codes.

## **MAJOR FINDINGS**

The NCIC data uncovered an average of 2 more arrests for cohort members compared to the Delaware data. However, the trajectory models that resulted from both sources of arrest data were essentially the same, with trajectory group membership across both data sources identical in over 95% of the cases. For the total sample, a five trajectory group model fit the data best, with three groups differentially increasing their rate of offending and then leveling off to near zero, and an additional two groups increasing at different rates but remaining more criminally active throughout the time period compared to the desisting groups.

According to accounts given during interviews, only about one third of individuals had desisted from both drugs and crime completely, regardless of race and gender. However, the majority of those persisting were primarily only involved in drug use, not other crime. Supporting the identity theory of desistance, interviews revealed that the vast majority of offenders who had successfully desisted from both crime and drug use first transformed their “offender identity” into a “non-offender working identity.” This was true for both race and gender groups interviewed. This cognitive process was typically motivated by respondents realizing that if change did not occur, they would likely become what they feared, either dying an addict, dying in prison, dying alone, or some other horrible fate. To behaviorally conform to their new “non-offender” identity, respondents used various tools including changing their “people and places” by



seeking out noncriminal ties and staying away from locations that triggered their drug use or criminal behavior. Although treatment usually did not result in immediate desistance for most, the vast majority who eventually “got clean” relied on the tools learned in treatment programs when they were ready to use them. Religion also was cited as a tool by many used to establish pro-social support networks that reinforced their new identities.

Contrary to life-course theory, partnership and parenthood did not appear to be “turning points” for the majority of our respondents. However, when they were ready to get clean, rekindling relationships with adult children or grandchildren was an extremely important motivating factor for many of our respondents. Similarly, while getting a good job did not deter the majority of addicts from relapse upon release from prison, it is clear that finding stable employment that paid a living wage was extremely difficult for this sample of drug involved offenders and that deciding to get clean and/or maintaining a “non-offender” identity was more difficult when access to a meaningful quality of employment was beyond reach or nonexistent. Moreover, for many respondents, continued substance abuse while working and parenting appear to have been routine, until the addiction escalated and they were compelled into property crime, or another risky situation. For others, street hustling (selling drugs on the street) was the only way to make a living, at least a living wage and allowed for the only means of financial efficacy to which they had access.

Interviews also revealed that a large group of offenders had consciously changed their drug use to reduce their risk of physical harm and/or decrease the probability of arrest. We classified “harm reducers” as those who had once been addicted to hard drugs like cocaine and heroin, and now only drank alcohol or used marijuana. Importantly, like desisters, harm reducers appear to have *intentionally* moved from a high and harmful rate of substance abuse to a lower less harmful rate, which resulted in both a better life for the individual as well as an increase in public safety. The majority of harm reducers were employed and functioning in their family roles and perceived their continued substance use as necessary for pain relief or recreational enjoyment, and relatively normal.

Although the majority in this sample continued to use drugs, most had been clean at various times in the lives, and most were

abstaining from hard drugs and using marijuana. Many had gotten clean while doing time in prison, and others willfully got clean for months at a time while on the outside, but many simply could not sustain the routine. Some still addicted to drugs engaged in crime for financial gain only when needed. However, most of the older users had pushed their use behind closed doors and obtained their money through conventional means, either because getting another felony was too risky for them or because they perceived themselves too old for the “hustling” game. Several lived with family members or boy/girlfriends and earned money in conventional jobs, in “under the table” employment, through charity, or through disability income.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results of this research support the contention that drug addiction often leads to criminal behavior and is a chronic lifetime disease characterized by relapses and behavior that appears undeterred by the threat of either formal or informal sanctions (Anglin, 2009). Narratives from respondents revealed that the vast majority of offenders who had successfully desisted from both crime and drug use had transformed their “offender identity” into a “non-offender” identity. This cognitive process was typically motivated by realizing that if change did not occur, they would likely become what they feared, dying an addict or dying in prison. To conform to their new “non-offender” identity, respondents used various tools including changing their “people and places” by seeking out noncriminal associates and staying away from previous locations that triggered their drug use or criminal behavior. Although treatment may not have resulted in immediate desistance from substance use, the vast majority who eventually “got clean” did rely on the tools they had learned in treatment programs. Religion also was used as a tool by many to establish pro-social support networks that reinforced their new identities. Contrary to some previous studies and theoretical views, good jobs, partnership and parenthood did not appear to be “turning points” for the majority of our respondents. However, when they were ready to get clean, rekindling relationships with adult children or grandchildren was an extremely important factor in their lives. Similarly, while getting a good job upon release from prison did not deter the majority of addicts from relapse, it is clear that finding stable employment that provided a living wage is extremely difficult for this sample of drug involved offenders and that deciding to get clean and/or maintaining a “nonoffender” identity is more difficult when good employment is nonexistent.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was that a critical component of the desistance process is “being ready” to change, which is an integral part of Paternoster and Bushway’s (2009) identity theory of desistance. They have argued that several things must occur before an offender is ready to leave their life of crime behind. First, offenders must make connections between the hardships and harms they are experiencing in their lives with their current identity and the kind of person they want to become. Part of this also involves connecting previously unrelated events so that the hardships and failures they have had in the past are projected into the future and perceived as likely to occur again. It is this new understanding that what were previously thought of as isolated and unique events are actually the logical and inevitable consequences of their current identity and will not go away until that identity is changed and intentional self-improvement begun. As such, cognitive-behavioral theory may be an effective intervention strategy to accelerate this self-discovery process. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, which has been shown to be one of the more effective prison-based therapy programs in terms of reducing recidivism (Lipsey, Landenberger, & Wilson, 2007), is premised upon providing clients with better cognitive skills including but not limited to the skills necessary to identify problems and the consideration of alternative courses of action to solve those problems, the evaluation of possible solutions before adopting a course of action, provision of critical reasoning and rational deliberation skills, the importance of long-term planning, and the importance of taking the position of other people within one’s social environment. Although cognitive therapy is not theoretically based on the identity theory of desistance, the practices of cognitive behavioral therapy appear to provide offenders with exactly those cognitive and rational skills that would enable them to more easily “put two and two together” and realize that the life of a criminal offender and drug abuser will likely result in them becoming their “feared self.” Such self-awareness would be instrumental in getting offenders ready to change, ready to adopt a new identity and begin the process of movement toward a non-offender identity.

Our research also confirms previous work that has placed female criminality within a larger context of a violent childhood and cycle of violent relationships (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2003). Female offenders in our sample were almost 10 times more likely to have been sexually victimized as children compared to their male counterparts and many of these women continued to experience

violence at the hands of intimate partners through adulthood. Many of these victims acknowledged the use of drugs and alcohol as a salve or escape from these traumas, which ultimately led to their addiction and incarceration. Because drug related crimes are the most common repeat offense for women (Deschenes, Owen, & Crow, 2007), helping females heal from primary traumas would seem to go a long way to reducing recidivism, net of drug treatment programs.

Our results also have implications for the current War on Drugs, which continues to warehouse drug addicted offenders in prison for increasingly long prison sentences. While many of the offenders in the original cohort had engaged in property and violent crime when they were younger, recent arrest data indicated that the majority of offenses in recent years were for parole/probation violations regardless of race and gender. Interviews revealed that parole was not only a failed deterrent for many respondents in our sample, but it was a direct impediment to successful reentry and long-term desistance. Although intensive probation with random urine tests is extremely popular, respondents expressed continued frustration with the costs and energy associated with probationary supervision. The respondents in our sample, especially those who were low-risk and nonviolent, articulated a great deal of frustration with the daily obligations connected with probation officer meetings including securing childcare, convenient and affordable public transportation, missing work, and even sleep for those working several jobs. Many expressed the desire for incrementally decreasing supervision or meetings that were more regularly scheduled to help abate the stresses of intensive supervision. Many who gained employment in the service sector but failed to recover from their addiction were eventually sent back to prison for parole violations. Again, we question whether sending individuals whose only crime is addiction back to prison is a cost-effective strategy for prevention and treatment for drug-involved offenders. In sum, we contend that rather than remain regarded as a matter of crime control, offender reentry must be recast as a critical public health issue. The costs of unsuccessful offender reentry, particularly for those with drug addictions, manifest in medical care expenses, the loss of future earning, public programming expenditures, homelessness, criminal justice resource disbursement, and decreases in collective quality of life measures.

## **LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

As with all research, this study is not without several limitations. Although we utilized a random selection method to obtain the sample for in-depth interviews, we cannot assume that the resulting sample was without selection bias. Because of sample mortality, transience, and some still under correctional supervision, it took three sample selection draws to fulfill the race and gender quotas within all five trajectories. This sampling bias may threaten the study's internal validity. However, because our primary research goal was to understand the mechanisms of desistance, and over 50% of our interviewed sample was obtained from the “desisting” trajectories, we are fairly confident that our results are internally valid.

Sample generalizability of both Phase I and Phase II of the research is also an issue. The extent to which the findings based on this sample can be generalized to all drug-involved offenders is not known. However, we believe the large sample size that was representative of the five different trajectories of desistance ameliorate the compromises to sample generalizability.

Another limitation with the qualitative component of this research is “authenticity.” It is not improbable that some respondents may have been untruthful, particularly about such things as their recent criminal involvement or substance use. One of the procedures the research team used to document authenticity of an interview was to write up “interview responses” immediately after each interview. In these responses, interviewers described their perceptions of the interview including the contextual understanding that was often manifest in nonverbal behavior, such as silences, emotional outbursts, humor, etc. These were important for validating a small number of respondents who said they had not been using drugs, although their nonverbal behavior, such as continuous scratching and sniffing would indicate otherwise. Because of these interview responses, we know that these inconsistencies occurred in only a small fraction of the interviews, thereby increasing the authenticity of our findings.

The sampling design of this study included African American and white males and females. However, because sample sizes were too small, the qualitative sample did not include persons of Hispanic heritage or members of other ethnic groups. As such, we cannot assume the findings here are representative of other groups including Asian Americans, American Indians, or others.

While certainly not definitive, our findings regarding the identity theory of desistance are promising. Our research, and that of Maruna (2001) and Giordano and colleagues (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph, 2002), strongly suggests among drug-involved offenders who live during a period of economic contraction that the turning points identified by Sampson and Laub may not be either available or successful in leading offenders away from crime. There is a great deal of work left to be done, however. One of the most pressing issues is the causal ordering of identity and other cognitive variables and structural factors like marriages, jobs, and children. What is clear is that the belief that only jobs and marriages will lead offenders to desist is too simplistic. Additional research that is directly focused on offenders' growing sense of dissatisfaction with their lives, the cognitive and emotional changes undergone leading them to think that they need to be a different kind of person, and how these may link to new, conventional opportunities will go a long way toward a better understanding of why and how offenders desist from both substance abuse and crime.

Additional research is also needed that includes other subgroups of the population (e.g. juveniles, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, Latinos) to determine whether the mechanisms of desistance described here are similar. It would also be advantageous to determine the extent to which these findings are representative of criminal offenders who are not drug involved.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, over 7.2 million people are under some form of correctional supervision in the United States (Glaze, 2011), including nearly 4,900,000 adults under community supervision (Bonczar & Glaze, 2011). Except those under sentences of death or life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), the majority of these individuals will be returning to their communities. For example, during 2009, almost 731,000 prisoners were released from our nation's prisons back into the streets (West, Sabol, & Greenman, 2010). A large percent of individuals under correctional supervision have been convicted of drug law violations, primarily possession (Dorsey & Zawitz, 2005), and once released a majority of these offenders will return to prison for new offenses or for parole violations (Langan & Levin, 2002). Research indicates that the drug addicted offender appears to be particularly vulnerable to long-term patterns of relapse and re-offending (Anglin, 2009).

Except for intensive experiences with long term aftercare programming (Inciardi, et al. 1997), there appears to be very few programs that significantly increase the probability of success for ex-offenders attempting to become conforming members of society, particularly for those with drug addictions. For example, a recent evaluation of a large federally funded reentry initiative to develop projects to improve the reentry prospects of offenders to the community called the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) has not been promising. Overall, the evaluation project indicated that there were only modest effects on recidivism for offenders exposed to enhanced reentry programming 15 months post release compared to those who did not receive the enhanced programming (Lattimore & Visher, 2010). Studies that include offenders who are not exclusively "violent" have more promising results. While therapeutic community programs that continue after release from prison have proven to be effective in

reducing both recidivism and relapse (Inciardi, et al. 1997), only a small percentage of the correctional population has access to such programs. Other advances in treatment have focused on programs that follow three principles that include risk, criminogenic needs, and responsivity (Andrews et al., 1990, see Pendergast, 2009 for review). Risk consists of several elements but can generally be described as characteristics that increase an offender's likelihood of future criminal behavior or substance abuse. Criminogenic needs refers to offender's needs related to recidivism and relapse and includes many factors such as poor problem-solving skills, poor educational and employment skills, limited self-control among others. And the response principle is related to both a particular offender's style of learning as well as the characteristics of staff who deliver treatment (Pendergast, 2009). The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) has supported research propagated from these research-based principles of treatment, which have provided a road map for programming treatment in correctional settings (NIDA, 2012, Pendergast, 2009). Despite some promising new approaches to treatment, the high number of offenders reentering society annually coupled with the less than ideal projection for their future success gives urgency to the present study. Unlike NIDA-funded evaluation studies intended to determine the efficacy of specific programs in reducing recidivism and relapse, the primary goal of this project was to increase our understanding about the underlying mechanisms and processes of desistance from crime and drug use among current urban, drug-involved, largely minority and increasingly female criminal offenders. Using a mixed methods research design, this research follows former drug-involved offenders for over 20 years post release from prison, using both official arrest statistics and in-depth interviews.



## **Theoretical Background**

Over the past two decades, there has been theoretical speculation about the causes of desistance from crime (Sampson and Laub 1993; Maruna 2001; Maruna and Ray, 2007; Giordano et al. 2002; Laub and Sampson 2003), however, it is not entirely clear whether the factors identified in this literature are relevant in today's economy or social context. In a series of works, Sampson and Laub have shown that within a sample of boys that were heavily involved in delinquent offenses in the 1950s, and were at high risk for involvement in adult criminality, some desisted from crime if they were able to strengthen their social bonds as adults (Laub and Sampson 2003; Sampson and Laub 1993). In particular, boys who successfully found stable jobs, found satisfying marriages, and took advantage of the post-World War II GI Bill were more likely to desist from crime than boys who were less successful in forging social bonds later in life. It would have appeared from the work of Sampson and Laub, therefore, that the keys to successful desistance from crime are stable jobs, stable marriages, and the expansion of educational opportunities.

There are, however, reasons to be cautious about the generalizability of these findings to the present day. Glen Elder (1985), one of the pioneers of life course theory stressed repeatedly the need to incorporate and account for historical context when studying pathways of human development, stating explicitly, "The life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime" (Elder, 2003). It is thus vital to

explore whether developmental pathways and the mechanisms that affect them are stable across time and place.

The boys studied by Sampson and Laub, the “Glueck boys,” (Glueck and Glueck, 1950) were exclusively white and came of age in the 1950s when the American economy was rapidly expanding. The unemployment rate in the 1950s hovered near 3-4% so they had available to them relatively abundant, high-paying, stable manufacturing jobs to assist them in moving from crime to a more conventional life. They were not hindered by serious drug addictions and/or racial discrimination. The ready availability of relatively high-paying and stable manufacturing jobs certainly made them a more attractive marriage prospect for a conventional woman. What the Glueck follow-up may tell us is that white males, even white males with an extensive history of delinquent offending, entering into adulthood in a particular historical period with an expanding manufacturing and booming post-war economy were able to find stable and well-paying jobs, were not saddled by the demands of drug addiction, which in turn enabled them to attract stable and conventional partners. All of these factors increased the likelihood that some of them would move away from their prior life of delinquency to a more conventional crime-free life. What was true for white males entering adulthood in the 1950s, however, may not apply to females, minorities, different historical periods, or under different social and economic conditions.

The economic climate is a vastly different landscape today compared to the 1950s. Beginning in the 1970s, increased global trade has nearly eviscerated many industries in the U.S., particularly manufacturing jobs in urban areas, and employment has significantly reduced in virtually all factories that still exist. Clerical work has also been devastated and has been replaced by word processing, voice mail and scheduling software and cashier positions have increasingly been replaced by self checkouts. Today, offenders coming out of prison are lucky to land a job with a temporary employment agency or a fast food restaurant; most are unable to make a living wage or be eligible for health benefits, much less a pension plan. In 2010, the unemployment rate in Delaware, where the vast majority of respondents in this study lived, averaged 12%, with unemployment rates for African Americans even higher. Add to this economic reality the contemporary use of background checks in hiring practices and the employment picture for individuals with a criminal record is bleak indeed.

In sum, recent research investigating the desistance process suggests that the process of “going straight” may not be so easy for generations subsequent to the Glueck boys (Giordano et al. 2007; Nagin & Paternoster, 1994; Nagin & Paternoster 2000) and indicates that getting out of crime and drug use is a much more complex and difficult process. For example, O’Connell (2006) found that employment increased the likelihood of desistance for white offenders up to two years after release from prison, but had no effect for African Americans. Giordano and her colleagues (2002, 2007) studied a

sample of formerly incarcerated delinquents 10 years after release who resided in a rust-belt city (Toledo, Ohio) in 1995. Contrary to Sampson and Laub, they found that marital attachment and job stability were related to desistance for a very small subset of the sample only. The majority of their sample was unsuccessful at finding stable employment or a stable marriage, regardless of race and gender. Importantly, additional gender-specific pathways to desistance were revealed for women, such as having a child.

Based upon their empirical findings, Giordano et al. (2002, 2007) articulated a theory of desistance that emphasizes cognitive transformations, religious discoveries, and emotions in the desistance process rather than the more structural factors of Sampson and Laub that rely on the conventional roles into which former offenders enter. In their cognitive transformation theory of desistance, Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph (2002) contend that, “adult desistance likely requires that we theorize a more reciprocal relationship between actor and environment and reserve a central place for agency in the change process.” (p. 995). However, they also placed the ability to desist within the structural backdrop of individual actors, or as they say, “their discourse (and inferentially the character of their change efforts) necessarily draws on the themes that are within the reach of highly marginal women and men attempting to navigate the specific conditions and challenges of a late-20<sup>th</sup>-century environment” (Giordano, et al. 2002, p. 993). They elaborate (p. 1004), “actors make moves, but they do so within bounded territory, and a specific nexus of opportunities and constraints...” Giordano et al.’s (2002) initial theoretical

model emphasized what they refer to as the “up front” social psychological changes that ex-offenders must undergo today before taking advantage of opportunities like jobs and conventional relationships (See Maruna 2001 for another example of the kinds of cognitive and emotional changes offenders must undergo before becoming “ex”).

The evidence seems to convincingly argue that criminal offenders who are released into the community today and who also happen to be racial minorities and heavily involved with drug use, are not good candidates for the “get a good job and spouse” route to desistance, what Giordano et al. (2002) referred to as “the full respectability package.” Criminal offenders who are also addicted to drugs would seem to be heavily embedded in what Hagan (1993) calls a “criminal context.” Persons who are embedded in criminal contexts are isolated from the kinds of social connections and personal relationships necessary to create a legitimate life. This is further supported by Granovetter (2000) who has argued that jobs are obtained by loose personal connections with persons who themselves are involved in the labor market – that is, by the “strength of loose ties.” Criminal offenders, particularly those with an extensive history of drug use, are likely to have isolated themselves from the very social relationships necessary to secure employment that would get them out of a life of crime and addiction.

The movement out of both criminal behavior and drug addiction, particularly for racial minorities in economically depressed economic urban areas, is extremely difficult. Because drug abusing minority ex-offenders have an extremely hard time finding employment in the first

place, and make unappealing marriage partners, their route out of drug abuse and crime must involve a different experience than that of the Glueck boys. Our work in this project was guided by a theory of the desistance process that incorporates the notion of social identity and involves a far more consequential re-thinking of the self than that implied by deterrence theories in general (Sampson & Laub, 1993; Laub & Sampson, 2003) or by the “cognitive transformation” process delineated by Giordano et al. (2002). We appealed to Paternoster and Bushway’s identity theory of desistance (2009), which relies on the concept of identity that is theorized to provide direction for an individual’s behavior (Burke, 1980).

### **An Identity Theory of Desistance**

The identity theory of desistance emphasizes the individual identity as reflexive, interpretive, and as such, premised on human agency. There is a long intellectual tradition that emphasizes the importance of one’s identity to virtually all behavior (James, 1890; Mead, 1934; Cooley 1902; Stryker 1980). Identity, a sense of whom one is, is important for numerous reasons, the most important for our concerns is that it motivates and provides a direction for behavior. Persons, of course, have multiple identities. Some selves are oriented toward the present, which comprise the notion of the “working self” (Markus & Wurf, 1987). In addition, we also have a sense of self that is directed toward the future, typically defined as the self we would like to become, or alternatively, as the self we would not want to become or fear becoming. Markus and Nurius (1986, 1987) have defined this future orientation of the self as a

*possible self*. The possible selves “are conceptions of the self in future states” (Markus & Nurius 1987, p. 157) and consist of goals, aspirations, and fears that the individuals have about what they can become. For example, someone who is addicted to heroin may fear that they will die of an overdose or die alone in prison.

In their identity theory of desistance, Paternoster and Bushway make a distinction between one’s working identity and the kind of person that she/he wants to become or their possible self. (2009, p.1105). Offenders, they contend, will retain an “offender” working identity as long as they perceive it will net more benefits than costs. The process of changing an offender identity is gradual and occurs:

*“when perceived failures and dissatisfactions within different domains of life become connected and when current failures become linked with anticipated future failures.*

*These failures include a sense that being an offender is no longer financially beneficial, that it is too dangerous, that the perceived costs of imprisonment loom more likely and greater, and that the costs to one’s social relationships are too dear ....The perceived sense of a future or possible self as a nonoffender coupled with the fear that without change one faces a bleak and highly undesirable future provides the initial motivation to break from crime....Human agency, we believe, is expressed through this act of intentional self-change.” (p. 1105)*

In their theory, intentional self-change is understood to be more cognitive, internal, and

individual, with new social networks approached and mobilized *only after* the emergence of the new, conventional identity.

For someone with a current or working identity as a criminal offender or drug user, to begin to consider a conventional, non-criminal possible self in the future, their attachment to the current identity must be weakened. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that the weakening of a criminal identity comes about gradually and comes about as a result of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with crime and a criminal lifestyle. The dissatisfaction with crime is more likely to lead to a conventional possible self when failures or dissatisfactions with many aspects of one's life are linked together and attributed to the criminal identity itself. It is not just that one has experienced failures, but that these diverse kinds of failures become interconnected as part of a coherent whole, which leads the person to feel a more general kind of life dissatisfaction. It is this kind of life dissatisfaction that can lead to identity change, or what Kiecolt (1994) has termed intentional self-change.

Baumeister (1991, 1994) has referred to the linking of previously isolated dissatisfactions and senses of failure as the *crystallization of discontent*. This crystallization of discontent, part of a subjective process of self-interpretation or self-knowledge, is:

*understood as the forming of associative links among a multitude of unpleasant, unsatisfactory, and otherwise negative features of one's current life situation.*

*Prior to a crystallization of discontent, a person may have many complaints and*



*misgivings about some role, relationship, or involvement, but these remain separate from each other. The crystallization brings them together into a coherent body of complaints and misgivings... The subjective impact can be enormous, because a large mass of negative features may be enough to undermine a person's commitment to a role, relationship, or involvement, whereas when there are many individual and seemingly unrelated complaints that arise one at a time, no one of them is sufficient to undermine that commitment.*

(Baumeister 1994: 281-282)

While no one single complaint or dissatisfaction may be enough to motivate someone to question their life of crime or drug use, the linking together of numerous previously isolated complaints may be sufficiently strong to undermine a person's commitment to a role or identity as a criminal. This evolution of the self is not characterized as an epiphany or an event, but rather a process. They explain, ".....it is likely that one's commitment to an existing identity comes about only gradually and subsequent to the linking of many failures and the attribution of those linked failures to one's identity and life as a criminal." (2009, p. 1121). Thinking of one's possible self as a non-offender, they contend, is when one realizes that the "costs of crime are beginning to become too great and that being conventional might provide either greater satisfaction or at least a lower price." (p. 1121). The gradual process is important in the identity formation process, as Paternoster and Bushway (2009) explain, "Offenders seeking to break from

crime....slowly begin to “play at” a new identity and make initial and safe forays into a more pro-social life. (p. 1132).

In the identity theory of desistance, changes in friendship networks and intimate relationship as well as securing alternative jobs and vocations are important because they help maintain or bolster a fledging changed identity. Importantly, the theory predicts that securing jobs, attracting new marriage partners, and involvement with new friends come about *after* a change in identity has occurred. The change in identity has already occurred in the mind of the person; they have weighed the costs and benefits of the exiting identity and alternatives, and are behaving in ways that conform to the new possible self. The self-regulating component of the possible self contains a specific strategy or way of behaving in order to enact self-change, which includes things like finding a new job, new partner or spouse, new neighborhood, and new friends. While others have viewed such structural supports as the primary causal factor in producing criminal desistance (Sampson & Laub 1993; Laub & Sampson 2003), this theory views these structural factors primarily as providing support for and maintenance of an already altered identity. They are intervening variables to the antecedent variable of identity change.

In sum, this theory is related to Giordano and colleague’s (2002) notion that offenders must undergo “upfront work” or a “cognitive transformation” before desisting from crime, however, it is more general than this. Paternoster and Bushway (2009, p. 1153) explain, “We have argued that a change in identity from a criminal offender to a non-offender is a process that

everyone who successfully desists from crime must undergo. Unless there is a change in identity, an understanding of a possible self as a non-offender, then the kinds of structural supports for change (a conventional job and a new social network) are unlikely to be created, and ultimately desistance from crime will not occur. Giordano et al. have argued that the cognitive transformations they talk about are only applicable in a limited range....When the offender lives in a social environment of extreme disadvantage or an environment of relatively great advantage, the cognitive transformations they describe do not matter.”

The identity theory of desistance does acknowledge the importance of structural conditions; it contends that disadvantage will increase the likelihood of failures, and that social supports for change will not be taken advantage of unless the foundation of social identity change has first occurred. However, the theory contends that identity transformation is necessary for all desistance.

Incorporating these theoretical insights from identity theory into Sampson and Laub’s age-graded theory of informal social control, the proposed multi-method project sought to gain a better understanding of how the processes of recidivism and desistance from crime occur among a sample of urban, drug-involved, largely minority male and female criminal offenders who were released over 10 years ago. While important parts of previous theories of criminal desistance have been empirically examined, there have been no equally comprehensive tests of the Paternoster-Bushway’s identity theory. This is largely because the requirements for such a test would be rather demanding. Existing data sets that include long-term criminal offending information generally lack measures of the crystallization of discontent or of perceptions of the possible self, which are two critical constructs of their theory. Moreover, the collection of new

data to specifically test the theory would be both costly and the results would not be known for years since the desistance process cannot be determined in the short-term. In this research, we offer a preliminary empirical examination of the identity theory of desistance using data collected from a subset of drug-involved offenders who were originally released from Delaware prisons in the early 1990s. As part of an earlier study of their participation in a drug therapeutic community while in prison (Inciardi, Martin, and Butzin 2004), extensive quantitative data were collected from these offenders. In the current study, arrest data for this same cohort from the state of Delaware and the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for the years 1969 through 2008 were collected. We use these long-term arrest data to estimate semi-parametric group trajectory models and identify groups of offenders characterized by their arrest and incarceration patterns. Phase II of the study combined a qualitative component by conducting intensive interviews with random samples of both African American and white men and women from each trajectory group. The primary goal of these interviews was to illuminate the underlying mechanisms and processes by which respondents either desisted or persisted in substance abuse and crime, with particular attention given to the possible role of identity change.

## RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

The project used a multi-method design and proceeded in two phases. What do we mean by mixed methods research? While there are many definitions of mixed-methods research; we utilize the operationalization provided by NIH's Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, which emphasizes, "focusing on research questions that call for real-life contextual understandings....employing rigorous quantitative research assessing the magnitude and

frequency of constructs and rigorous qualitative research exploring the meaning and understanding of constructs....intentionally integrating or combining these methods to draw on the strengths of each” (Creswell, Klassen, Clark, & Smith, 2011, p. 4). The use of mixed methods research for this study was a conscious decision to combine the inherent strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to maximize our understanding of the life-course trajectories of substance abuse and crime for a contemporary cohort of drug using offenders.

The first phase of the research involved the estimation and analysis of offending trajectories. The resulting trajectories formed our sampling framework for Phase II. In Phase II in-depth interviews were conducted with 304 respondents selected from within the different offending trajectories in order to examine the processes and mechanisms that led to a particular trajectory. Details of each phase are provided below.

## **Sample**

This study was built upon earlier work funded by NIDA and awarded to James A. Inciardi in collaboration with Co-Investigator Steven S. Martin, later joined by Co-PI Daniel O’Connell. This research originated as two companion R18 Research Demonstration grants to implement and evaluate innovative treatment alternatives for prison releasees with histories of serious drug abuse. The studies began one year apart, with a project called ACT beginning in September, 1989 and the Therapeutic Community (TC) in September, 1990. The ACT study examined the relative effectiveness of three models of drug abuse treatment 1) a 12-month in-

prison therapeutic community (KEY) for males only, followed by conventional work release; 2) an intensive outpatient approach for males and females which combined treatment and case management functions (ACT); and, 3) conventional community supervision for male and female releasees (COMPARISON). The TC study examined the effectiveness of a 6-month residential work release TC treatment program--CREST Outreach Center--for male and female prison releasees with histories of drug abuse. A work release COMPARISON group of drug-involved offenders was also followed over time. "Work release" is transitional incarceration where inmates go out to work but return to the work release center to sleep when not working. CREST was the first work release TC in the nation, and it has been a model for a number of new transitional criminal justice treatment facilities in the decade since its inception.

It is important to note that both of these large demonstration projects were "quasi-experimental" in making comparisons with a randomly selected group of inmates who were not assigned to treatment (ACT or CREST); both studies also had a non-random comparison with a group already assigned to the in-prison KEY TC. The samples from the two studies were merged and continued to be followed in a competing continuation R01 Grant, "Ongoing Studies of Treatment for High Risk Drug Users." Subsequently, the "Ongoing" R01 award was changed to R37 "Merit" status, and ended in July, 2006.

The baseline sample for the Merit study was 1,250 offenders. The descriptive characteristics of the sample by gender and race and the univariate characteristics of age

respondents should have been in 2010 are displayed in Exhibit 1. Other factors of interest from the original sample at the first baseline include a mean age of the cohort of 29.6, 44% of the cohort had prior incarcerations, they had an average of 11.2 years of education prior to baseline incarceration, and 73% were in some form of treatment (Butzin, O'Connell, Martin, and Inciardi 2007).

Tracking respondents for reassessment in the original study yielded a response rate of 80% at the 6-month and 18-month follow-ups, and in the 75% range for subsequent follow ups. The distributions of the sample by gender and race closely match the gender and ethnicity percentages in the Delaware prison population. All respondents in the Ongoing Project were assessed with comprehensive questionnaires and asked to provide blood and urine samples for testing at each interview (the overwhelming majority did provide samples). Respondents were interviewed immediately prior to their release from prison and again 6 months, 18 months, 42 months, and 60 months subsequent to release. Tracing information was retained on the sample, and subject consent forms left open the possibility that respondents would be re-contacted in the future

### Exhibit 1: Sample Characteristics of Original Cohort by Gender, Race, and Age, N=1250

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Race		
White		28.0%
Non-White		72.0%
Gender		
Male		80.4%
Female		19.6%
Race/Gender		
White Male		22.6%
Black Male		57.8%
White Female		5.5%
Black Female		14.2%
Age in 2010		
Range		29-73
Mean		45.5
Median		45.0
Standard Deviation		7.4

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The analyses and outcome studies that were published from these evaluations consistently demonstrated that through 5 years post release those having participated in CREST had significant reductions in drug use and arrests, even when holding constant the expected effects of age, criminal and drug histories, and either differential selection or differential attrition (Butzin, O’Connell, Martin, and Inciardi 2007; Inciardi, Martin, and Butzin, 2004). However, the bulk of the sample remained under probationary supervision for multiple years after release. Although these studies to date are among the longest outcome studies of relapse and recidivism among offenders, the potential for truly long term effects 10 years or more post release, which the present study provides, has remained an unexplored area and is the primary goal of this project.

The sections that follow will provide a more detailed description of the methods utilized in Phase I and II of this research along with their respective results.

## PHASE I - TRAJECTORY ANALYSES

Phase I of this project used the entire cohort of 1,250 offenders for the quantitative analyses modeling trajectories of offending. From the sample previously followed for the full 5 years, we know that there were 16% who abstained from illicit drug use for the full five years (Inciardi, Martin and Butzin 2004); of those 76% were male, and 75% were African-American. Another 6% of the sample was abstinent for the last 2 years of the observational period after

earlier relapse to drug use. As such, there is a cohort of 22% who were in an extended period of abstinence at the 5 year time point.

Using the sample information from these data, we first obtained arrest and incarceration data from the Delaware Statistical Analysis Center through 2008 (the most recent data available at the time). However, a random records check of states bordering Delaware revealed that a nontrivial number of offenders in this cohort had been convicted in other states. As such, NCIC data was obtained to provide a validity check on the official data from Delaware.

Exhibit 2 shows the mean number of arrests for the entire time period in Delaware by type of arrest, gender and race. As shown, the sample was highly criminally active over the time period; while the mean number of arrests was 33, the actual range of arrests was 1 to 149 with a standard deviation of 19. The major categories of arrests with the highest numbers were Property and Public Order offences.

**Exhibit 2 Mean Number of Arrests, 1979 Through 2008 Using Delaware Data by Type of Crime, Gender and Race.**

	<b>Male (N=1006)</b>	<b>Female (N=244)</b>	<b>White (N=351)</b>	<b>African American (N=899)</b>
<b>Total Arrests</b>	33.6	29.9*	34.4	32.3
<b>Violent Crime</b>	5.4	2.8*	5.1	4.9
<b>Property Crime</b>	9.3	10.8	9.7	9.5
<b>Drug Offenses</b>	3.8	3.4	2.8	4.1*
<b>Weapons Offenses</b>	1.1	.6*	.9	1.1
<b>DUI</b>	.7	.5*	1.4	.4*
<b>Public Order</b>	9.6	8.3*	10.7	8.8
<b>Probation Violations</b>	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.5

\* Indicates gender or race group comparison is significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

In addition to the high frequency of arrests, the overall criminal propensity of the sample is reflected in the amount of time spent incarcerated. Through 2008, males spent an average of 7.6 years in Delaware prisons compared to only 3.6 years for the females. African Americans, on average, spent longer in prison (7.2 years) compared to whites (5.8 years). Both gender and race differences were significant at the  $p.01$  level.

These descriptive characteristics of the sample are important, but can the offenders in the cohort be characterized into subgroups based on their offending and desistance patterns over time? To answer this questions, we estimated trajectories using PROC TRAJ, the group based semi-parametric trajectory modeling procedure (GBTM) developed by Nagin and colleagues (Nagin 2005; Jones et al. 2001; Jones and Nagin 2007). The GBTM estimates trajectories of the course of behavior over age or some time period. Rather than assume the existence of groups that share the same developmental trajectory, the method identifies distinct groups in the data. PROC

TRAJ has been used in psychology, economics, and criminology extensively and there are more than sixty studies in the literature within the past ten years that have used this method to identify developmental trajectories.

Group-based trajectory modeling is a statistical procedure that allows the identification of distinctive trajectories of some event (in this case, criminal behavior) over time. It is a specialized application of finite mixture modeling. If  $y_{it}$  represents the number of crimes  $y$  for person  $i$  at time  $t$ , where there are multiple time points where  $y$  is measured and each time point measures a person's age, then the GBTM estimates up to a cubic relationship between  $y_{it}$  and age:<sup>1</sup>

$$y_{it} = \beta_0^j + \beta_1^j Age_{it} + \beta_2^j Age_{it}^2 + \beta_3^j Age_{it}^3 + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where

$Age_{it}$ ,  $Age_{it}^2$ , and  $Age_{it}^3$  are individual  $i$ 's age, age squared, and aged cubed at time  $t$ ,  $\varepsilon$  is a normally distributed error term, and  $\beta_0^j, \beta_1^j, \beta_2^j$  and  $\beta_3^j$  are parameters estimated from the data that determine the shape of the polynomial. A separate set of  $\beta$  parameters are estimated for each  $j$  group. Depending on the nature of  $y_{it}$ , the link function is either a censored normal, binary logit, or Poisson distribution.

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<sup>1</sup> We use age in this example for illustration but in the proposed study the variable will be "time," more specifically, elapsed time from an anchoring data point. Time will be measured as the number of years since initial release from prison.

Software to estimate trajectory models can be found in PROC TRAJ, a SAS plug-in.

Users specify the type of model estimated (logit, censored normal, or Poisson), the number of groups to be estimated, and the order of the polynomial for each group. Output includes the estimated age parameters, the proportion of the total sample that belongs in each group, and for each person the estimated probability of being in each group. PROC TRAJ assigns the person to the group that has the highest probability. Graphics are available which produce the shape of each estimated trajectory group. For each model the BIC (the Bayesian Information Criterion) model fit statistics is provided where BIC is equal to:

$$BIC = \log(L) - .5 * \log(n) * k$$

Where,

$L = \log \text{likelihood}$

$n = \text{sample size}$

$k = \text{number of parameters estimated in the model}$

Model selection is based upon both best BIC and substantive concerns.

For each model BIC can be used to estimate a probability that a given model  $j$  is the “best” model under the assumption that the true model is in the model space:

$$p_j = \frac{e^{BIC_j - BIC_{\max}}}{\sum_j e^{BIC_j - BIC_{\max}}}$$

Where

$p_j = \text{probability that } j \text{ is the best model}$

$BIC_j = \text{BIC of model } j$

$BIC_{\max} = \text{BIC of model with the maximum BIC score}$

One can then determine, for example, if a model that has 2 groups, 3 groups, 4 groups ... k groups is the best fitting model, given that the true model is in the model space.

With PROC TRAJ, we identified trajectories of post-release offending within our original sample of offenders. In addition to the full sample trajectories, we also conducted gender and race specific modeling to determine the variation in trajectories across groups. Time at risk was taken into account in the estimation of the trajectories. In the model estimation the proportion of the time during the year that the person was not locked up was treated as a time-varying covariate. The estimated offending trajectories, which are based on annual rates of offending, do then take into account time on the street and, thereby controlling for the, opportunity to offend.

## **RESULTS OF TRAJECTORY MODELS**

### **Model Estimation**

Initial trajectory models were estimated with the full pooled sample of offenders with Delaware only arrests. First, a four group model with only quadratic time terms was estimated. After this iteration a five group model was estimated up to an eight group model. In all models exposure time was controlled. Frequently the BIC value continues to increase as more groups are added and this was the case here. The BIC value continued to increase with each sequential addition of a new group to the model. Rather than continue to add groups and waiting for BIC to

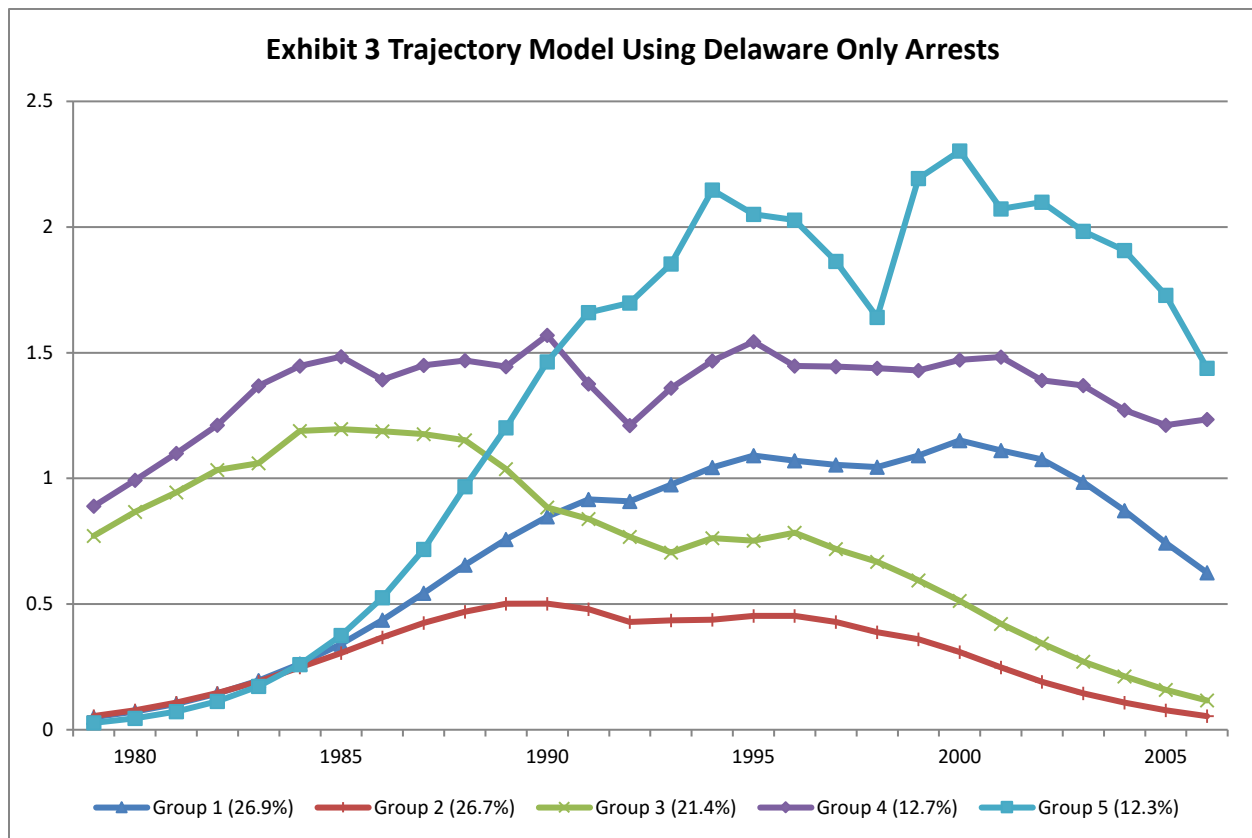
decline, in such cases Nagin (2005, p. 74) argued that “more subjective criteria based on domain knowledge and the objectives of the analysis must be used to select the number of groups to include in the model.” It should be kept in mind that our estimation of these groups was to identify substantively distinctive groups of offenders for sampling purposes. Given our two-fold concern for distinctive groups and parsimony we settled on a five group model, where all time terms were quadratic. The probability of group membership for each group is as follows:

Group 1	93.42%
Group 2	94.63%
Group 3	93.41%
Group 4	94.39%
Group 5	96.78%

The average probability was 94.53%. Since Nagin (2005: 88) recommends an average group probability membership of at least .70 for all groups, our five group model provides a good fit to the offending data.

Exhibit 3 shows the results of our five group model using only arrests from the state of Delaware. Three of the groups start off at a very low (zero or near zero) rate of offending but then diverge after about seven years. One of these groups continues to increase in arrests becoming the highest offending group (Group 5) throughout the time period. This group comprised about 12% of the total sample. The second of these three groups (Group 1) increases their offending over a ten year period but then flattens until it begins to decline. This group

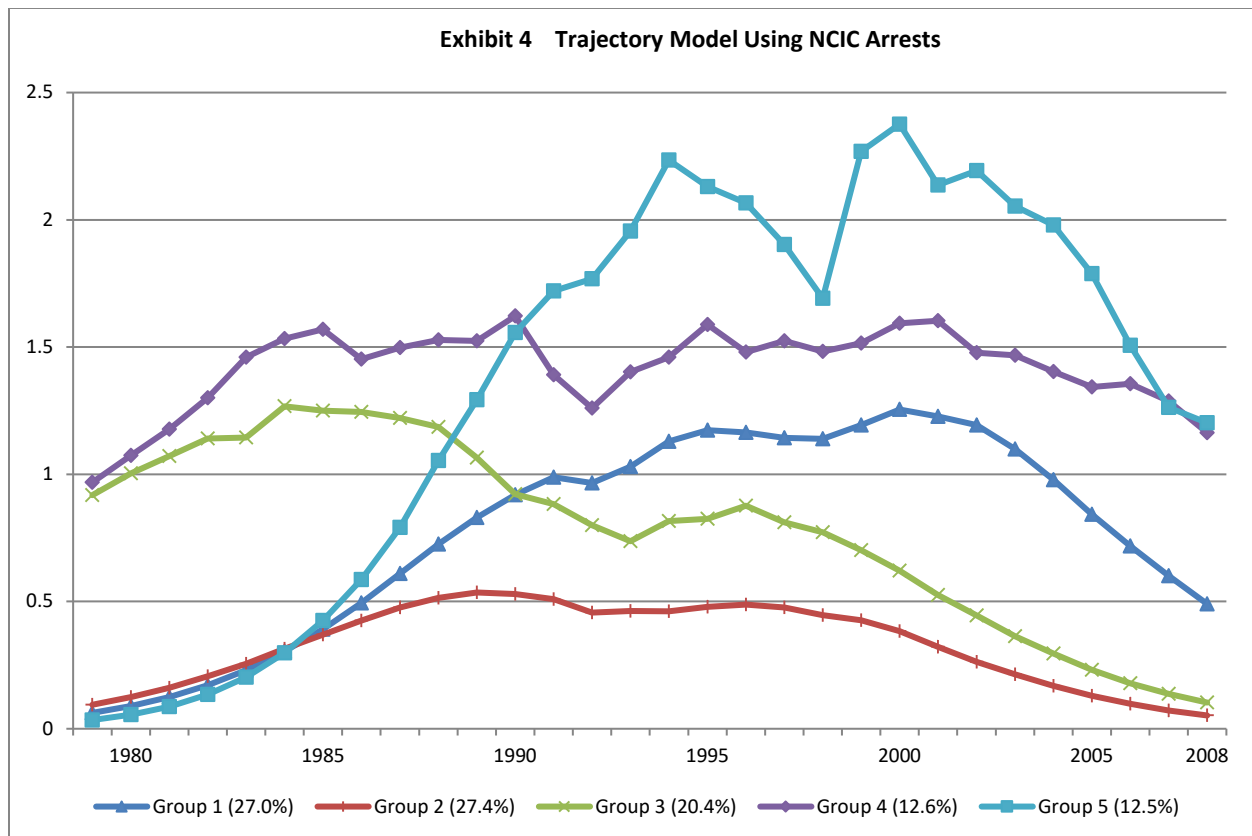
comprised about 27% of the total sample. The third of these groups (Group 2) slightly increased its offending, but remained the least offending group throughout the entire time period, declining to near zero offending by the end. This group also contained about 27% of the full sample.



Two other groups (Group 3 and Group 4) started out at a much higher rate than the other three, but they followed distinctive trajectories subsequently. Group 3, about 21% of the total, slightly increased its offending but then gradually declined over time until its rate was near zero at the end of the time period. Group 4, about 13% of the total, increased its offending by about 50% in the first five years and stayed very stable until the end of the time period.



When we estimated group trajectories with the NCIC arrest data, the shape of the five group trajectories were very similar, group size remained similar, and, in fact, 90% of the sample stayed in their same trajectory group. The shape of these trajectory groups are shown in Exhibit 4. This comparability in trajectory groups and group membership was true even though over half of the cohort members had been arrested outside Delaware and the average number of arrests uncovered by NCIC for the entire cohort was 2.2 with a standard deviation of 4. Exhibit 5 provides the descriptive characteristics for each trajectory group by gender and race, and Exhibit 6 shows the distribution of each racial/gender group within each of the five trajectory groups.



### Exhibit 5: Gender and Race Characteristics of Trajectory Groups for Full Sample

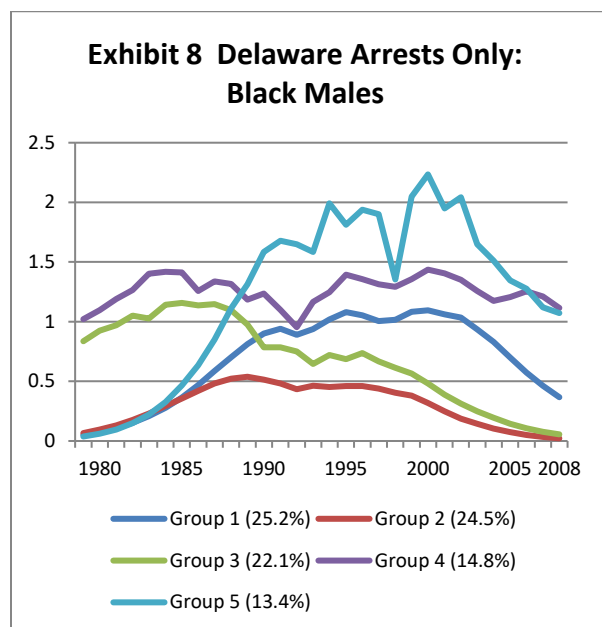
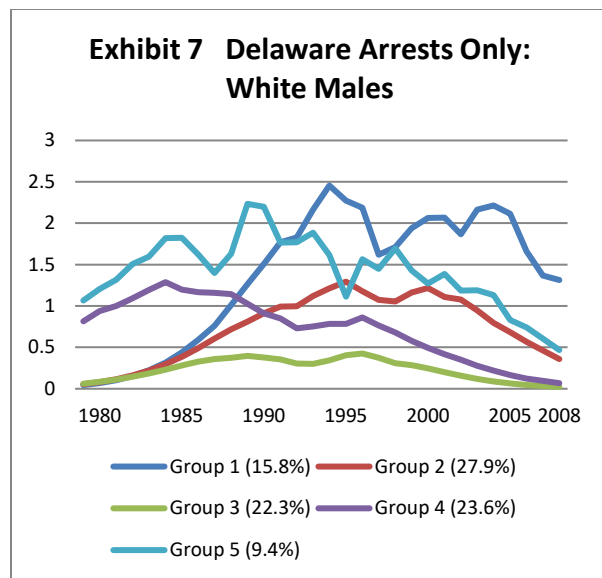
Group	% White Male	% White Female	% Black Male	% Black Female
1	23.7%	7.4%	52.8%	16.0%
2	20.8%	7.1%	51.2%	20.8%
3	25.7%	2.2%	62.3%	9.7%
4	19.2%	2.4.5%	69.5%	8.9%
5	22.1%	6.0%	62.4%	9.4%

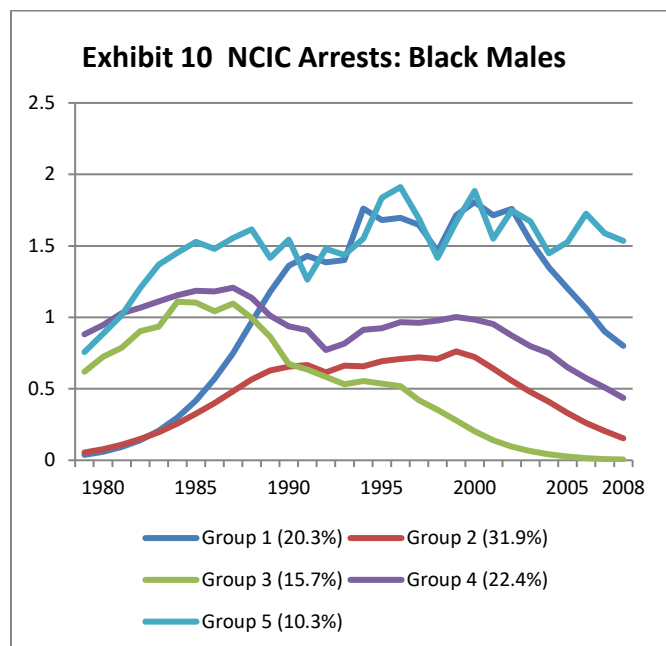
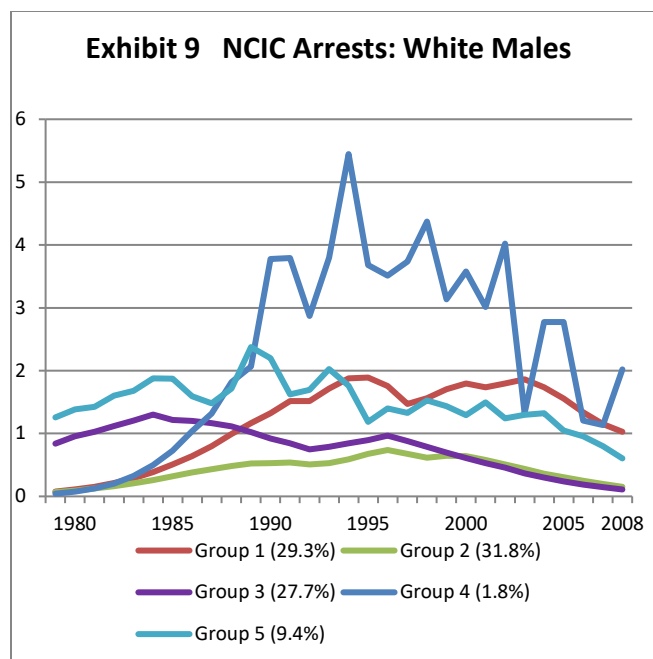
### Exhibit 6: Race/Gender Distribution by Trajectory Group for Full Sample

	Trajectory Group				
	1	2	3	4	5
White Male	29.2%	23.6%	24.3%	11.3%	11.6%
Black Male	25.5%	22.7%	23.0%	20.0%	12.8%
White Female	38.2%	33.8%	8.8%	5.9%	13.2%
Black Female	31.5%	37.6%	14.6%	8.4%	7.9%

Subgroup analyses for gender and race groups indicated essentially the same pattern, wherein the NCIC data indicated a higher frequency of arrests, but the trajectory curves did not significantly change across data sources. Figures 7 through Figures 14 display the trajectory models by gender and race.

Exhibits 7 and 8 display the trajectory models for white and African American males. Both subgroups resulted in a five group trajectory model as the best fit, but there are slight differences in group characteristics. Whites had a slightly higher arrest rate of offending (see y axis) for the two highest offending groups, however, only one group, Group 5, continued offending over time at a relatively high rate compared to the other groups; this group represented 9.4% of the total white male sample. For African Americans, Groups 4 and 5 both continued offending at a relatively high rate, and combined, these two groups accounted for about 28% of the total African American male sample. The group structures for models estimated using NCIC data were similarly shaped, however, there were many more arrests captured for white males using the NCIC data compared to the Delaware data (Exhibits 9 and 10). As such, the peak time of offending for Group five resulted in an average rate of offending over 5 compared to a rate of 2.5 for the same group using the Delaware data.

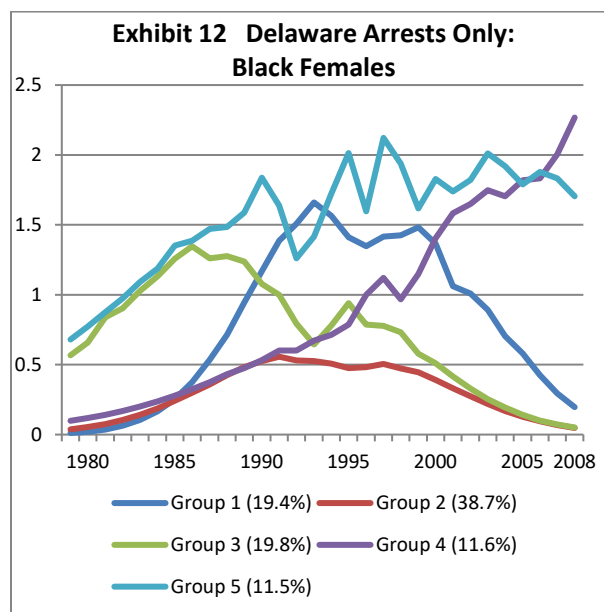
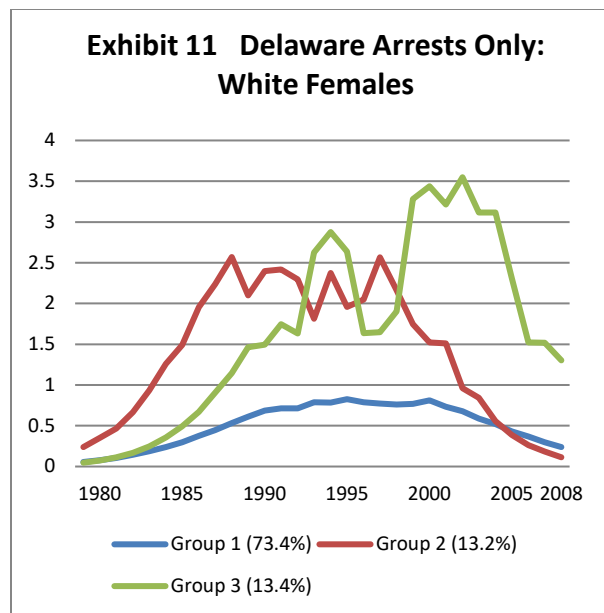


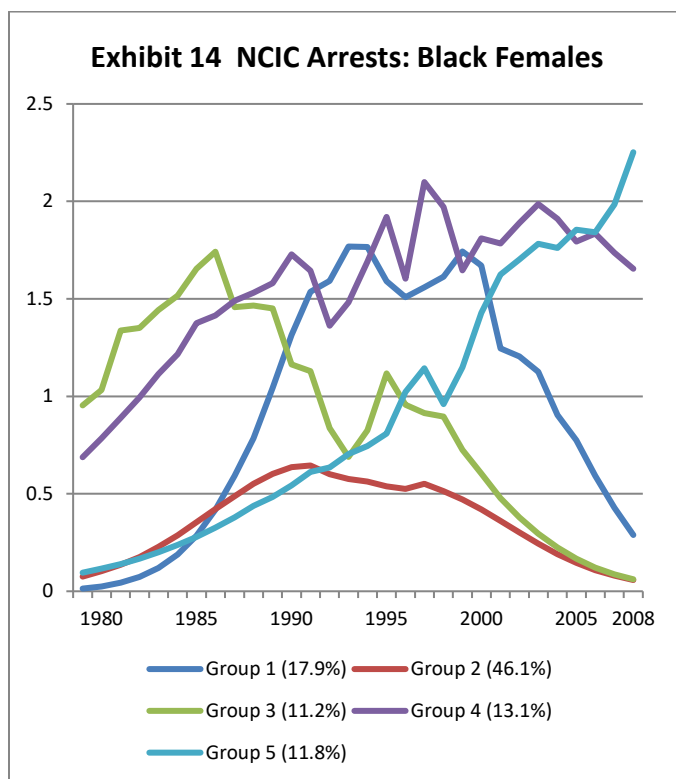
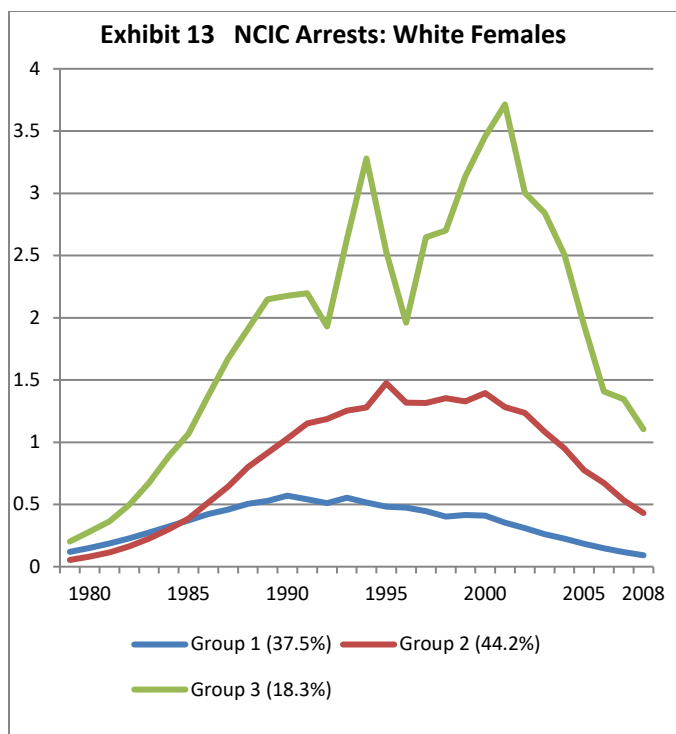


Exhibits 11 and 12 compare the trajectory models for females using the Delaware arrests data. The best fitting trajectory model for white females using both Delaware and NCIC data resulted in only three distinct groups compared to a 5 group model for all other subgroups

including African American women. Similar to white men, white women in the highest offending groups had a higher rate of offending compared to their African American counterparts. Group 1 remained at a relatively low rate of offending throughout the time period, compared to Groups 2 and 3, which differentially increased their offending rate over time. Only Group 3 remained actively engaged in offending; 18% of all females were represented in this group in the NCIC data (Exhibit 13). African American females also had a Group that started out at a low offending rate and remained there until they it leveled off to a near zero rate (Group 2). The other 4 groups all differentially increased their rate of offending over time, with two groups decreasing to near zero levels (Groups 1 and 3) and the other two groups remaining at relatively high rates of offending (Groups 4 and 5).

There are clearly differential patterns of offending across race and gender. However, while there are those who have differential rates of increasing and decreasing their offending across the lifecourse, all models essentially make a distinction between those group members who appear to have dropped out of crime and others who persist.







## PHASE II – NARRATIVES OF DESISTANCE

The sample for the in-depth interviews was randomly selected from the offending trajectories identified for the total sample. That is, within each of the five trajectory groups, a random sample of white males and females, and African American males and females was selected for in-depth interviews using a random numbers table. However, because of sample mortality, transience, and some still under correctional supervision, it took three sample selection draws to fulfill the race and gender quotas within all five trajectories. A total 632 individuals from the original cohort of 1257 were contacted for interviews. Of these, 141 were deceased, 161 were still incarcerated, 42 were out of state, and 83 were unreachable by any means. Of those successfully contacted and not incarcerated, 304 agreed to be interviewed and only 5 declined. While we originally did not want to conduct interviews with those still in prison, 3 interviews of women and 4 interviews of men who were in the “High Persisters” category were interviewed in prison or work release to increase the sample size of this trajectory group. The sample characteristics of the final sample are displayed in Exhibit 15.

As noted above, the purpose of the interviews was to more fully understand the mechanisms and processes by which respondents either desisted or persisted in substance abuse and crime. Selected respondents were first be contacted by letters, reminding them of their previous participation and requesting that they call the research office if they were willing to

participate in the interview. Follow-up was needed in most cases, and was done first by another letter, then by phone, and finally by personal visits. In all contact modes (mail, phone, in person) potential respondents were told that their participation was voluntary, that their answers would be completely confidential, that the focus of the questions was on their opinions about drug use and drug treatment, and that they would be paid \$100 for the interview for their time and travel expenses. Informed consent statements (Appendix A) were signed at each interview.

**Exhibit 15: Descriptive Characteristics of Persons Interviewed in Phase II of Study, (N=304)**

	N (%)
<b>Trajectory Group</b>	
1) Low Desisters	81 (26.6)
2) Medium Desisters	87 (28.5)
3) Early Onset Desisters	56 (18.4)
4) Early Onset Persisters	39 (12.8)
5) High Persisters	42 (13.8)
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	187 (61.3)
Female	118 (38.6)
<b>Race</b>	
White	120 (39.3)
African American	185 (60.7)
<b>Age</b>	
Range	30-65
Median	45.1
Mean	45.0

It is important to note that the names for the various trajectory groups are just that – subjective names that were given to best describe the individuals within each trajectory, even though the name may not validly describe every individual in the group. For example, not everyone in each of the groups labeled “desisters” had actually desisted from crime and substance use, but the majority had, and all exhibited an offending level near zero. For example, according to the most recent data available in 2008, a small percentage of individuals in the groups labeled “desisters” were arrested in 2008: only 9% of the individuals that were placed in the “medium desisters” group had an arrest, compared to 15% of the “early onset desisters,” 40% of the “low desisters,” 58% of the “early onset persisters,” and 54% of the “high persisters.” Moreover, it is important to remember that these trajectory models were based on official arrest data, which often differed from self-report data discovered in the interviews. That is, a respondent may have been placed in a “desisting” group using the official data, but may have told interviewers that they were still using drugs. However, data from official reports were strongly correlated with self-reports. According to accounts given during interviews, only about one third of individuals interviewed had desisted from both drugs and crime completely, regardless of race and gender. However, the majority of those persisting were primarily only involved in drug use, not other crime. Only about 5% of both African American and white respondents self-reported involvement in some type of criminal activity; and a roughly equal percent of women (7%) reported criminal involvement compared to men (5%).

All interviews were face-to-face interviews conducted by trained, experienced interviewers, including the PI’s on the project, who had experience from other studies in doing interviews with criminal justice offenders. Interviews were held at a field office in downtown Wilmington, Delaware or at the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies (CDAS) office in Newark.

In a few cases in which respondents were living in Southern Delaware and did not have transportation, interviewers made the trip to their homes. The Department of Corrections would not allow interviews to be tape recorded. As such, except for the 6 interviews noted above, it was decided that those selected for the sample who were still in prison would not be interviewed because the goal was to obtain respondent's story lines, which would be difficult to capture without tape recorders<sup>2</sup>. Interviews lasted from 1 to 3 hours with an average of 90 minutes per interview.

### **Event History Calendars**

The interview guide resembled an Event History Calendar (EHC). The EHC method has proven to be an extremely useful tool for collecting retrospective data on life events within different domains such as relationship changes, medical history, and offending (Belli, Stafford, & Alwin, 2009). EHC tools have been used to collect data ranging from a few days to large segments of the lifespan (e.g. 10 years or more). One of the primary benefits of the EHC tool is that it is thought to facilitate the recall of past events because, in addition to presenting respondents with questions, it provides them with the visual calendar. These calendars typically contain several domains of questions and cues (e.g. living arrangements, relationships, employment, significant life events). Recall is facilitated by cuing respondents with other events

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<sup>2</sup> Notes were used to analyze the 7 interviews conducted in correctional settings as well as 2 audio taped interviews that were corrupted.

from their own pasts in order to facilitate memories of other thematic and/or related events.

Experimental evidence suggests that using EHC methods in retrospective studies is, in fact, superior to more typical question and answer interviews. For example, using random assignment to either standard question-list interviewing versus interviewers employing EHC instruments, Belli, Shay and Stafford (2001) found that the EHC elicited superior retrospective reports and that respondents found questions presented within the EHC easier to understand and answer. Although EHC tools have most often been used to collect quantitative fixed-format data from offenders (Horney, Osgood, & Marshall, 1995), in this project, the EHC was used to facilitate the recall of qualitative perceptual information from respondents.

The first EHC developed for this project included a family of baseline calendars along with annual calendars that began with the year they were first released from prison after the baseline data was originally gathered in the early 1990s. These annual EHC calendars covered 11 domains (e.g. living situation, relationships, substance use, criminal offending) with numerous questions within each domain (see Appendix B for a copy of the original EHC). Another important tool we used in our EHC to facilitate respondents' recall was the placement of arrest and incarceration dates obtained from official data within the calendars. These cues proved extremely useful for helping respondents recall both their offending histories as well as other life events in their past.

During pretesting with 3 ex-offenders, the EHC method covering an average of 10 years post release took an average of 6 hours to quantitatively capture all data points in all domains of the calendars. By the end of the pretest interviews, both interviewers and respondents had diminished attentiveness and patience. Based on these pretests, subsequent interviews used the EHC as a “heuristic” device to facilitate respondent’s recall of major life events including offending and re-entry. Calendars were pre-coded with all arrest and incarceration information obtained from official data as well as birthdays. Using the EHC in this way proved extremely useful for cuing respondents and triggering memory recall. Although there is clearly opportunity for error in respondents’ recall of events over such a long reference period (over 8 years in most cases), previous research has documented the high degree of validity present in such longitudinal research when life events calendars are used (Glasner & Wander, 2009; Stafford, 2009).

The interviews, then, were primarily open-ended and resembled conversations rather than formal questions and answers. The goal was to uncover what Agnew (2006) refers to as “storylines” in understanding criminal offending. A storyline is a “temporally limited, interrelated set of events and conditions that increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in crime” (p. 121). Unlike the criminal event perspective, however, storylines include many factors, from an objective event (e.g. needing money, a major life event involving trauma or loss), to an individual’s perception of these events (e.g. increased strain, thoughts of consequences), the situational characteristics present (e.g. presence of criminal peers, lack of

capable guardians) combined with all the other background characteristics such as an individual's level of self-control, their emotional states, and their stakes in conformity (Agnew 2006). For each criminal and drug relapse event self-reported or obtained from official records, respondents were asked to recreate the event both perceptually and structurally, including information about what his/her life conditions were at the time (e.g. employment, intimate relationships, education, children), how the event transpired, and his/her perceptions of the circumstances (e.g. what they were thinking about themselves, the risks and benefits associated with engaging in crime). Interviewers probed for the cognitive processes that may have been related to a crystallization of discontent as articulated by Paternoster and Bushway (2009). These storylines also illuminated the events and cognitive processes related to desistance from crime and drug use, including offender's identities – working, feared, possible and pursued. Unlike solely variable-driven research that predict models of recidivism and relapse, these narratives helped us understand the *causal mechanisms* through which background, situational factors, and identity affected both offending and desistance (Bachman & Schutt, 2013).

## **Interview Coding**

All interviews were transcribed verbatim into Word and then imported into NVivo for coding. A code is an abstract representation of a concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Codes in our scheme ranged from purely descriptive (e.g. narrative describing first arrest or first incarceration) to more interpretive concepts such as reflections of identity change, or a feared self. The coding

team included one PI, and three graduate student assistants. The coding process began with a list of initial categories developed from the existing literature on desistance including such key indicators as turning points, indicators of agency and readiness for change, the psychological indicators of discontent and fear. Before coding began, training sessions ensured that definitions of each category were understood along with the coding guidelines. Next, all researchers coded the same transcripts and discussed their coding strategies in group meetings. In these team meetings, the decision to add new categories was adjudicated and coding discrepancies were illuminated. This team dynamic, we believe, allowed the emotional expression of the researchers to enhance the conceptual decision making process (Sanders & Cuneo, 2010).

The coding process continued with weekly “marathon” reliability meetings in which the same interview was coded by all four researchers. Not only did this increase inter-coder reliability, but these meetings also were forums for the discussion of emerging categories and opportunities to clarify coding strategies for ambiguous narratives. To facilitate future analyses, all emergent themes were coded; this resulted in over 20 main categories (e.g. Discontent, Turning Points, Incarceration) with over 100 subcategories used in the coding scheme (see Appendix C for list of all main and sub-nodes). This coding strategy that allowed a breadth of tree nodes and codes to be created that were not mutually exclusive will be invaluable to future research using these data, even though fewer codes may have allowed us to more easily provide global “counts.” As a result, these codes helped us organize the transcripts into meaningful segments, but ultimately, our conclusions are based on a holistic reading of the interviews in their entirety, looking for trends in those interviews that involved true desistance compared to



those that did not. Moreover, this analysis strategy is consistent with the philosophy of qualitative and constructivist/interpretivist research (Bachman and Schutt, 2013), compared to the positivist philosophy. For the protection of our respondents, the qualitative analyses that follow utilize pseudonyms.

## **RESULTS OF PHASE II - TRANSFORMATION**

In this section, we will outline the underlying mechanisms that reduced criminal involvement and substance abuse in some cases and the complete abstinence from both in others. For ease of presentation, we provide comparisons between those who desisted, those who consciously engaged in harm reduction behavior, and those who are still persisting in drug use and crime.

Before we describe the processes of desistance and persistence, however, it is important to document a little about the childhood experiences of our sample to provide a backdrop to their lives.

### **CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES**

The respondents in this sample generally reported growing up in working class neighborhoods, where everyone on the block looked out for children, even in some of the most blighted and economically strained areas. Roughly 1 in 5 of all respondents regardless of race reported presence of drugs in their neighborhoods, or at least knowing where they were available, while African Americans were more likely to grow up in neighborhoods riddled with poverty and economic disadvantage. Some reported growing up in a “rough neighborhood,” although most were still likely to state that their neighborhoods had gone through extreme

changes over the past 30 years, with this change most often going from bad to worse. “It was a totally different neighborhood and this is 15 years ago. Go out there now and it’s like, there’s gangs and stuff there. It’s really like a different, wow....it used to be a nice neighborhood,” reported Dave. Others reported the drastic change that occurred when guns became prevalent, “It was a lot of fun in the projects growing up..... regular fights were an everyday occurrence....but there wasn’t that much [gun violence] then.” Even those who grew up in neighborhoods riddled with violence were reluctant to say they had a bad childhood:

*What was your neighborhood like growing up?*

*The average neighborhood in the ghetto, drugs everywhere, violence.*

*Would you say you had a good childhood?*

*Yeah.*

The majority of those who grew up in poverty also were still likely to report good childhoods, or at least acknowledged that their parents did the best they could. “Mom always made sure we were fed but clothing as always a problem....back then...it was the surplus places.”

While more than 1 in 5 African Americans in the sample lived with a grandparent at some point in their childhoods, a large percentage of white respondents also lived at times with their grandparents (17%). Both African American and white respondents were more likely to have bad relationships with their fathers compared to their mothers. About 30% of both white and African American respondents reported that their fathers were largely absent from their childhoods. Just over 1 in 10 respondents, regardless of race, reported that their parents were addicted to drugs, while over 1 in 4 respondents reported that their fathers were addicted to alcohol.

The majority of our sample attributed their socialization into drugs and crime to simply “getting in with the wrong crowd.” Virtually all of the respondents were introduced to alcohol

and drugs from their friends. Although there were exceptions, the majority of respondents began drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana as their first drug of choice. “Alcohol was the first thing that I ever used, and I was probably 13, and then I started smoking weed.”

While the escalation of substance use through adolescence was the typical scenario, several offenders did not have their first drug experiences until much later in life, in their middle 20s and 30s. For example, Mitchell graduated from high school and then enlisted in the service. When military service was over, he came home and ended up getting involved with one of his high school friends who was selling drugs. It wasn’t long before he was addicted to crack and soon went through his entire savings to meet the needs of his habit. When the money was gone, he started selling drugs and committing robberies.

An equal number of males and females experienced physical abuse as child, which included being hit with an object or beaten enough to sustain injuries. Interestingly, while many respondents were “beaten with extension cords” and/or reported “having bruises” from discipline they received, many were still reluctant to characterize this as physical abuse. For example, Cassandra was beaten with a pot and sustained several black eyes growing up from being disciplined but went on to explain, “I mean she would beat me but see I don’t see beating as abuse...” Many of the women abused as children went on to intimate relationships in adulthood that were also abusive and some respondents grew up to repeat and perpetuate patterns of abusive behavior.

The only substantial subgroup difference was exhibited in reports of childhood sexual abuse and molestation. Nearly 3 out of 10 females in this sample reported experiencing child sexual abuse compared to only 3% of the males. Virtually all of the perpetrators of this abuse were either family members or friends of the family. Cassie was molested by her father and has

suffered PTSD throughout her life because of this experience:

*It is hard for me to concentrate because so many bad things happened. I remember a lot of them and it got hard for me to sleep. Back then it was hard for me to sleep when I was being molested because I didn't want to sleep with my back turned – I had to sleep so I could see out the doorway and he used to sneak in at night and I would just freeze. I would see him, you know, creeping in my room, and well, there for a while I was thinking that my mom had a pistol in her drawer in her room and I was plotting to get that gun and shoot his ass. Excuse my French but that's what I was plotting. And then I got to thinking 'god, what's going to happen to me?' you know I was 10 or 11 years old.*

It is important to note that while the majority of the respondents in this sample did not characterize their childhoods as bad, there were several who were severely traumatized as children. A few children were simply abandoned by their mother or father, to live with extended family, without an explanation. Others were raised by one or both parents struggling with addiction and unable to keep food on the table or the children in clothes. Sandy recalls stealing food for her siblings because there simply was nothing in the house to eat. Others like Raquel have experienced abandonment along with other extreme abuse:

*Growing up as a child was very destroyed. My parents were abusive. My mom had a mental history. [There] was constant mental abuse and physical abuse. I can remember as a child my dad actually, he tried to make us believe it was all my mom's doing, so as a child it made me hate my mom, didn't want to be around her. At the age of 6 my dad took me from the home actually kidnapped me really and moved me to a different place from my brothers and my mother. I didn't want to go back because my dad made me believe that anything he said was true. He made me feel convinced that anything he did was to benefit me as a child, to benefit, help or whatever. I never seen my mom up until I was 12 I ran away from home to go find her. Reason why I ran away from home was because my dad was having sexual relations with me. For a long time I thought that was right and that it was, I didn't want to tell nobody. He said don't tell nobody, I was scared to tell anybody. But when they started talking about sex education in school that's when I realized myself that it was not normal. So I told the guidance counselor which I ran away. I was pregnant by my dad at the age of 13, made me get an abortion then that's where my troubles began.*

Raquel started using drugs to escape her trauma at the age of 15. In addition to self-medicating, a few victims retaliated against their abusers with violent self-defense. Mercedes's

mother was an alcoholic and when she was passed out, Mercedes was molested by her mother's boyfriend. After telling another family member, she was placed in various foster homes but always ran away to return to her mother. At 13, she acquired a gun because she was tired of "being hurt." At 15, she was gang raped outside of her apartment building by five young men, but she caught one of them and shot him 9 times. "I sat there and waited until he didn't have no more pulse and I sat like an extra hour so when the ambulance got there they couldn't bring him back."

In sum, while many in the sample characterized their childhoods as normal, the objective reality they experienced was far from that of the mainstream. Like many teenagers, most in the sample experimented with alcohol and marijuana, but unlike the rest of us, life circumstances and negative peer networks cemented the route to more addictive substances and criminogenic choices. Once addiction took hold and became their primary responsibility, other adult obligations, including the needs of their children, became secondary. For most, this resulted in illegal activities for financial gain, coupled with habitual stints in prison.

## **DECIDING TO GET CLEAN**

*"I'm done man! Man I'm done! I'm right now, this is where my life heading."*

For our purposes, individuals will be classified as having desisted from drugs if they were formerly addicted to more dangerous substances such as heroin and cocaine twelve months ago or longer, but currently abstained from all substance use or limited their use to drinking alcohol occasionally. Individuals formerly addicted to alcohol will only be classified as desisting if they did not use any substance in the past year. Individuals still under correctional supervision were not classified as having desisted. A later section will describe those whom we have labeled "harm reducers," which includes those who once used harder substances like heroin and cocaine,

but now only smoked marijuana and/or those who are now on prescription methadone or another opiate substance.

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that offenders will retain an “offender” working identity as long as they perceive it will net more benefits than costs. The process of changing an offender identity is gradual and occurs “when perceived failures and dissatisfactions within different domains of life become connected and when current failures become linked with anticipated future failures” (2009, p. 1105). These failures extend to multiple realms, like personal well-being, family relationships, and so on. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) also contend that this linkage of failures is often coupled with a feared self, that is, offenders perceive that without making a behavioral change, their future is bleak and will only contain more pain and hardship. This recognition and movement change is a cognitive and intentional change, at least initially.

Of those who appear to have made this cognitive transformation, the overwhelming majority, regardless of race or gender, had desisted from both drugs and crime. Moreover, this transformation was most often coupled with a concurrent perception of someone they did not want to become, their “feared self.”

### **The Feared Self**

For many offenders, the self they feared was simply a generalized fear of being stuck where they were, or as many stated, “tired of being sick and tired.” But when pressed to explain what they meant by “sick and tired,” many offered more specific fears. For example, Jeremiah was selling drugs, but his addiction led to him using more than he was selling, the financial strain of which eventually led to his committing robberies and several subsequent stints in prison. When he finally decided to make a change, he said, “I was like man I’m going to end up losing

everything.” Other “feared selves” were manifested in other ways, but were most often articulated in several forms including “dying an addict,” “getting killed in the hustling game,” or “spending the rest of my life in prison.”

### *Fear of Illness or Death*

For many offenders, the pinnacle of a culmination of health failures was illuminated in a death sentence by a medical professional or by the death of an addicted friend. For example, when asked how he could simply stop using after 20 years, Mike replied:

*When I was in the [Program] and my brother died and I said, ‘Lord. if you get me through this I promise you I will serve you and never pick up, cause I know that heroin killed my brother, I know it did.’ My brother was when he died he was 37 and if he was that old and he couldn’t walk a block, his heart was that bad. And I went to see him, I was in the [Program] and they gave me a pass to go see him.*

*So you got a story. So your story is in a nutshell...?*

*You know I don’t have no desire to use though, I really don’t. I’m too old now, too many illnesses, diabetic taking insulin now, taking pills and afraid if I smoke crack that I’m a have...you can’t tell me that I’m not gonna have a massive heart attack. [expletive] I ain’t thinking about that, I wanna live.*

Jake was also succinct when he contemplated what life on the streets had in store for him, “There’s nothing out in these streets. I realize it now. I tell my wife that there’s only two things outside for me, death and jail time, and I don’t want either one so there’s no reason to go outside.”

For others, like Carole, it was simply a slow deterioration of illness and physical decay:

*Well, what keeps you from falling back to using?*

*Thinking about everything I’ve been through. That I’m tired. It was making me sick. I was getting sick. It was messing my stomach up; I couldn’t hold anything down and I just didn’t want to start aging like that. Now I’m getting ready to get my teeth because I had to get them out because of drugs in the past. I made my mind up about that I only had 2 or 3 teeth left and I had them pulled because I would rather have none than those stupid little teeth.*

Tamara also talked about the health consequences and accidental trauma that

accompanies a life of substance abuse:

*I'm not glorifying my past. It was great when it was great if that's what you want to call it. It wasn't living it was dying.*

*But that's not what you thought at the time.*

*Oh [expletive] no. I was killing myself softly. I was smoking so much cocaine I was having seizures. I got a metal plate holding my chin together. I fell at a seizure landing on my face on a sidewalk, knocked my teeth out, busted my chin open, cracked my jaw, here and here I had to have emergency surgery to put it back together. [My mom] told me one time she thought she was coming to identify [my] body. That didn't even wake me up. I just did this, all of a sudden I was just done on my own. I just didn't want to get high no more, I didn't feel good anymore.*

### *Fear of a Life in Jail*

For some, doing time in prison was never easy, but it was just part of the game. For others, both men and women, doing time had changed a great deal over the past two decades. Many talked about the change in “doing time” from their early “bids” in jail. In their words, it is not so much the conditions in prison that have changed, but the totality of the attitudes and behavior of the “young knuckleheads” with whom they now had to share their sentences. Many respondents perceived the prison climate to be much more dangerous compared to the 1980s, and believed that young offenders of both genders were more violent and disrespectful. Many feared doing additional bids in today’s prison climate. Ron explained his fear this way:

*And people are like why not the first time?*

*I don't know, it's like you said back then, young, stupid and didn't really care cause back when I was going to jail, in and out, it did in a way, it used to be fun being in there. But now a days like I said when I got this last DUI and I went in there, before I got bailed out, I was like Man, this ain't for me no more.*

*You think your age has something to do with it?*

*Possibly. That and all the young kids in there, the way that they, they're wild. They don't care no more in there.*

*They're insane aren't they?*



*Yes, I mean we had the fights and stabbings and stuff back in the day but it ain't nothing like it is now. Yeah these boys gang bang, bum rush and what you going to do, unless you're going to get another body charge, but they don't care about getting another body charge.*

*But you do.*

*Exactly.*

For others, the fear of dying in jail was ever present:

*Yeah, I'm 37 years old and I've been out of jail almost 5 years, I don't want to see jail about nothing. My worst fear is to die in jail. So if I don't want to die in jail, I know I can't...*

*Can't go back right?*

*It's just as simple as that.*

As noted earlier, many offenders had done several stints in prison. Many were also aware that in their younger days, they had no desire to change, regardless of the consequences. John mentions this maturation when asked why he didn't quit drinking after the first two DUIs and how the connection between past failures and future failures was finally made:

*You had been in prison before for DUIs, why was this time different?*

*I wasn't ready to grow up yet. I didn't grow up until actually I was 31 years old.*

*Why did you grow up at 31?*

*I just started taking responsibility for my actions... and realized the party's gotta end or I'll be waking up in a [expletive]ing jail cell the rest of my life. Even though I'm flying by the seat of my pants by stupid [expletive] but what's gonna happen is something serious is gonna happen. I'm gonna either wrap a car around a telephone pole, or I'm gonna kill somebody.*

Women who were fearful of doing time in today's prison culture were just as articulate about their fears. When Diane was asked why going to jail didn't affect her behavior when she was younger, she explained:

*I guess being hard-headed had a lot to do with it, being stubborn, not ready to give in or whatever.*

*Give in to what?*

*Give in to drug selling and all of that, better life because with drug selling there's just three things.*

*What?*

*Institution, jail, and death you know what I mean? You have to choose straight because you don't want to do none of them, so you gotta go straight at some point in your life if that's what you want. But some people just don't and they end up in jail.*

*Including you.*

*For the rest of their life and that's not going to be me. I got an aunt right now.... she just got 5 years I mean she wanted to deal and she didn't know how to do that. Five years, she just did 5 years a few years back so I hope she straighten up after this time.*

Martha also reported:

*Jail is not like it used to be. It's worse..... That's a fact. They don't ever have to worry about seeing me in the system again. I don't care if I gotta scrub toilets for a living I won't be back in the system. I won't be selling drugs, I won't be using drugs, I won't be transporting them. None of that, not risking anything anymore.*

### *Fear of the New Hustling Game*

Related to the prison culture, most offenders also perceived the “hustling” game to have changed. The streets, according to many, had seen drastic changes, with rampant violence on the rise and everyone carrying a gun. Ray explained:

*It's too rough, it's terrible now they don't even care, and people are shooting now. Back when I was doing it people weren't doing this violence, it's guns and they don't even care they'll take you out. I want to live, I want to see, like I said, my grandkids grow up, see my kids grow up. I'm just tired too, I'm tired. I had enough I just want to live a normal life, that's all.*

Mohamed echoes a similar sentiment about the cultural climate change of hustling on the street:

*What's been the biggest thing for you staying out of trouble now?*

*I don't trust nobody. I don't trust all these new guys in the game. I was never scared of the police and to me it was like breathing, hustling. It was just easy. Some guys got nabbed. It was these new guys that scared me. And my friend got murdered, found in the trunk of a car, brand new car, pretty car but it don't matter, still dead in the trunk of it. People are getting killed over drugs, going by hearsay, he got this much money, he got this much money.*

Abigail had similarly been in the game for years, hustling for drugs and selling her body when all else failed. She was afraid of the violence and the guns, but more importantly, the toll being in the game had taken on her life:

*Well what is different besides, I mean you say you're older and you don't want to live like that anymore?*

*I just went through a brief period where, right before I got arrested and got this time, I was starting to get, I got high for a couple of days. It was not fun anymore, I was struggling. I didn't know what it was like to struggle, being out there to maintain myself. The drugs were terrible, which you were getting for your money, it wasn't worth it, you know. None of it was worth it anymore. The people that I knew were gone. Its all, there shooting each other now, it's not the same. It's not the same. It was fun when I started doing it. It was a whole different game it's not like that anymore.*

*What is it like now?*

*It's degrading now. What I have to do to get my money and what I allow them to give me for my money. No way. I wish I had all the money I spent on drugs. I'd probably own a condo and a car.*

### Fear of Dying an Addict

The life of an addict is nothing if not exhausting and scary. The vast majority of offenders in this sample had been to prison many times, and as a result, most had gotten clean, at least for a time. They had gone through the withdrawals and the “dope sickness” alone in their cells, only to return to the outside and seek the thrill and/or escape of the high once again, and soon found themselves waking up to the first thought of the morning being, “I need another hit.”

Jeff explains the morning he awoke, greeted by the less than glamorous world of addiction:

*I was just like I got to get up off of this. My tolerance is going higher and higher. I can't even get up out the bed. I don't even wanna wash .... I don't even wanna brush my teeth so I'm walking over to my mom's and I call her from the pay phone and I said mom what are you doing and she said nothing and I said I'm on my way over and she said why? What's the matter? I said nothing. I got a little teary eyed so she thinks something is wrong. She said babe what's wrong? I said nothing. I'll tell you when I get over there. She said well it's pouring down rain. I said I don't even care. I'm just gonna walk so I'm walking over there soaking wet. I'm walking by the graveyard and I'm saying God if you get me off of this, I will never go back. Prior to that I'm having God give me his little*

*dreams and I'm laying in the casket and I can see myself looking at myself and I said oh, damn. If I'm gonna go, it's gonna be natural causes.*

As with the other worries many offenders' fears were increased by having experienced the vicarious losses of others. Andre explains the reality of his friends:

*Go ahead. Just one hit. No, no, no, no. I saw too much over the years with my buddies, man. Crash and burn. A guy lost two or three friends from heroin. And the rest of them have nothing. They're living with their mother or father or on the street. Nobody's left. I know, man, I've seen it. A lot of my friends ended up like that. It's terrible. That's what drove me away because I don't need that.*

As is evidenced in the narratives above, the "feared self" manifests in several ways. At times, the fear was a general trepidation about their future self, as Daryl explains:

*You used the word 'crushed,' what does that mean?*

*I'll be honest with you, more than tired. I got scared. The last time I went back [to prison] I said I can't do this anymore. I told myself over and over again I can't do this anymore. I'm hurting myself, my loved ones, I was afraid that I'd be alone in life. And I didn't know whether I liked myself so I had to work hard to make myself better. ...I fought hard to be good in sports I loved to play and all that disappeared man for 20 years. It scared the hell out of me. I finally realized I was my own worst enemy.*

Of course, many offenders had fears that did not result in identity transformation or desistance. We all have fears. Many of us have fears of dying a gruesome death without dignity or fear the loss of loved ones. For some offenders, these fears may represent an initial motivation for change. However, the importance of a "feared self" does not manifest until they are linked with the "chain of failures," which serves to solidify an individual's intentional self-change.

### **Connecting Failures: The Catalyst for Transformation**

*"Like I said I made it a point to make that change, it just didn't come."*

Many offenders had left jail or work-release before with good intentions, only to relapse or recidivate shortly after. However, when real identity transformation occurs, offenders appear

to have been crystal clear that an “addict” or “offender” identity no longer fit who they were going to be. This process appears to be the same for all individuals, regardless of race or gender. Lauren puts this decision simply, “Did I want to keep using or remain clean? Cause that was a decision that I really had to make. No one else could make it for me, and I chose to not get high.”

Although many of us think that such a big decision would involve a great deal more mental rumination, remember that many of these offenders had been in and out of prison and clean at various times in their lives, only to relapse. Many had left prison before with “good intentions of staying clean” As such, these perceptual dramas had undoubtedly played out before, but with little conviction, or as Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend, without the necessary interconnections between past, present and potential failures.

Beth describes these perceptual connections very well, “I just got tired, I just gave up. I said, “Well something’s not working,’ ‘cause every time I used I went back and forth to jail.” Laurie echoes a similar realization when she described her final change, “I attribute it to me just really having the mind for wanting to do something different for myself. I didn’t wanna go back to jail. I know that if I don’t change from doing what I’m doing or whatever, I’m gonna be right back up in there.” Similarly, after being in and out of jail on possession of prostitution charges, Maria talked about finally wanting change after her longest sentence in prison:

*What happened in your head?*

*Willing. Determined. Motivated. I wanted change.*

*But why now?*

*I was tired! I was tired! I was tired! I wanted to get out of jail. I had never been to prison like that and I wanted out and I wanted to stay out. I wanted a better life for myself and my children. My children deserved me. All of that, you know..... I just wanted different. I wanted to be somebody that I was supposed to be and I wasn’t supposed to be a crack head or a prostitute all my life.*

Daryl elaborates on the firmness of his decision even before he returned to prison for the last time:

*How'd you deal with that though cause when you did get out did you feel a draw for relapse at that point in time?*

*No. I was done I was done I had made that decision long before I went in that I was done. I had made that decision long before they sentenced me. no matter what the sentence was, no matter what I was gonna have to deal with I had already made up my mind at that point in time that I would never put myself in that situation again.*

Others articulated their new beginnings very clearly, “I was ready, yeah. I think what has to happen is you got to feel it inside. I don’t need this no more. I have this, this and this and don’t want to lose all this. Something, I’ve you know, climbed out of the gutter per say you know and now it’s time to leave all that bull[expletive] behind me and go forward and it was honestly, it was pretty, not easy but once you put away, got rid of all your old ghosts in the closet and stuff like that, it was refreshing. So things were new.”

When the decision was made to stop using, many offenders had to literally pick up and leave wherever they were to make the break. Jerome had been living in a crack house for several months when he woke up and realized he did not want to be a crack addict any longer:

*Yea, I just I looked at myself in the mirror I mean I probably weighed freaking 110 pounds, 120, I just looked at myself and just got disgusted. I was broke didn’t have nothing. I called my sister up, I said man come get me, I left everything I had in that crack house, I just took a bucket of clothes with me and that was it, I just left everything. Turned my head, come get me. I stayed at her house that night and jumped on a bus [back home] the next morning and never looked back.*

Many talked about the importance of a trigger mechanism emanating from within, even though they didn’t articulate it as an identity change. For example, Donna talked about a “change in your heart,” as being the key to transformation. Importantly, she confirms that the transformation must occur before anyone can really get clean. “Even people who have been clean for only a year or two and they’re like ah you know, I’m going to make it. It’s not like they

say, I'm just done. When you hear people say "I'm done" those are the people who are usually done. And you have to have that, inside of you. I'm not doing this no more. I'm just not doing this no more and then you take the steps after it." Declaration of "I'm done" were used numerous times by offenders who had transformed, including Yolanda, who was in the middle of getting high when she concluded that enough was enough:

*I was in the process of smoking crack. And we had the radio on. The song came on. I turned the radio up loud everybody said this a church song turn it down. I said hold up. I started crying. I said I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. I'm done. And I turned around and gave my friends my cigarettes. Everything I had. And I walked to a pay phone called my mom collect and asked my mom can you come pick me up I'm done. She said you always say that. I'm not getting out my bed to get you. You'll be there when I get there. I was sitting on the steps five o'clock. I was sitting on my god sister's step waiting for my mom. Said I wasn't going to move. So my god sister came out got me up the step took me in the house called my mom and said you know she's sitting on the step saying she's not moving – she's waiting for you. She said she's done. Then my mom came over there and picked me up with the kids. I went home and never got high again.... .... Told my mom, I said mom I'm done this time. That was it. I never went back.*

Jamal illustrated the thought process of linking the same behavior with the same consequences, "Like I said, you just get tired of it, you just don't want that life no more, at a point it's just over, you get the same results, you keep doing the same thing you're gonna get the same results like every day in the program you come up with the same result and it's just not good.....that's not worth it."

Rita talked about the gradual process of coming to the realization that enough was enough and she was done, "It was decreasing I was coming to the end of myself. I had run out of options emotionally. It had nothing to do with the physical thing cause my kids were taken care of so I wasn't worried about that. But I'm talking about the thing that went on within me I was like look something has to give." Once the transformation was complete, many respondents articulated their new selves in pro-social terms, not simply by reinterpreting their past identities,

(Maruna, 2002), but as new beings:

*You said I deserve it now, what do you see about yourself as different then you did then?*

*I did it on my own. I didn't want to get high anymore....I'm sick of what I had to give up because of this drug. I'm no longer looking at myself as an addict anymore. I see myself as a mother, as a daughter, a friend. And I can only be those things if I leave that [expletive] alone. I'm putting that stuff first. If I can put something else ahead of that drug, I'm doing something. Because that drug, nothing, that's my true love, I'll throw everything away just to have that in my life. I'm making [getting drugs out of my life] a priority. I like being a mom. I'm enjoying my daughter now. I'm able to enjoy my daughter now. I'm having a decent relationship with my mom. That is a miracle. For the first time in 43 years, my mom has said I love you.*

### **After the Transformation: The Road to Desistance**

*"I'm case solo, you know what I mean?"*

After an individual decides that their deviant lifestyle is no longer paying off and she/he no longer wishes to be an "offender" and/or "drug addict," they must next begin to behave according to their new non-offender identity. This, of course, is often a difficult road to walk, particularly in today's economic climate where jobs are scarce and even family and friends that may have once provided financial support, are also feeling the crunch of the times. As the quote at the beginning of the section states, many offenders found themselves without friends because the majority of their peers were users as well.

Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that "[o]ffenders seeking to break from crime....slowly begin to 'play at' a new identity and make initial and safe forays into a more pro-social life." (p. 1132) One factor that they assert as inextricably linked to staying clean in this process, is a change in one's "preferences" or desires. Because preferences are linked to motivation, a change in one's identity is also related to a change in one's preferences. In addition, Paternoster and Bushway (2009) contend that identity change is unlikely unless deviant social networks are replaced by pro-social peer groups. This change does not happen in a vacuum, but occurs because individuals deliberately and intentionally seek out noncriminal



associates as part of their identity change. This assertion differs greatly from the assumptions outlined in Sampson and Laub's (1993) age-graded social control theory of desistance.

Paternoster and Bushway maintain that nonrandom, agentic modification to one's environment and peer association *follows* the decision to adopt a new identity. In short, a positive identity brings about a change in preference for the kind of people more likely to foster and support that new identity.

Many narratives reveal that following the crystallization of discontent and the motivation to reframe one's identity, this change in preferences and social networks was required to maintain their new "drug" or "crime" free selves. In fact, one of the mantras of twelve-step programs is to change "people, places, and things" to become drug and alcohol free. While it was virtually impossible for many of our respondents to simply pick up and move to a new neighborhood, at the very least, the vast majority who successfully desisted made conscious choices to change their social networks and daily routines. In this section, we will talk about the various avenues offenders took to retain their new conformist identities. Gerald completely eliminated the friends he used with, "Since I've been out of jail I haven't associated with one person I knew ever and it's been 20 years and I never saw anybody I knew before I was clean so that was helpful but yeah that's what caused my relapse was people and places."

For some, it appears that once the transformation was complete, the decision to move was virtually instantaneous. Many moved back in with family to get their feet back on the ground. Both Rick and his wife were addicted to crack when he came to his end, "Finally I was at the point where I was frickin' tired of the [expletive] and I looked at my wife and said look we're gonna move in with your parents. I blame, not blame, I credit [them] for a lot of stuff that they did because if we didn't go through the removing the people, places, and things back then I don't

think I'd had the knowledge to get out. So we moved up here ..... and I went to work at ..... and I said this is it, if this don't work I gotta go. I can't spend the next however many years bein' a crack head." Unfortunately, Rick's wife was not ready to quit, and moved back to the streets where she remains drug-addicted today.

Several delayed their parole release because they did not feel ready to leave their protected world. For example, after about ten years of selling drugs and using cocaine, Monica was eligible for release in six months but she chose to stay behind because "I wasn't ready, I didn't feel that I was ready to go out.....I didn't want to use again, I didn't want to use, I didn't want to be back around the people, places, or things. So that's when I came to live up here the first time." After she made this decision, Monica packed her bags and moved to a different city with a friend who was not an addict.

Others articulated a very conscious awareness that they had to exist in the same world in which they became addicted, and as such, needed to be able to have the will to avoid giving in to triggers and/or temptations that came their way. Nate worked with several drug users and had to set boundaries accordingly:

*What happened to that when you moved to \*\*\*\*, how did you stay away from all these people?*

*I eliminated them all. That's the only way to get a handle on it. You have to get within yourself and in order to do that you have to eliminate all of it. And I worked with people who do drugs and alcohol and you know I eliminate it. I don't have any dealings with them.*

*So you completely cut off your old associates?*

*Yeah and friends are few and far between. One of my buddies uses the term 'frienemies.' He always uses that, frienemies*

Alex further elaborated on the necessity of being strong enough to navigate his old world:

*Today I have a support group. Today I participate in my own recovery. You know I'm more open to criticisms. [I avoid the old people and places] at all costs but I'm not so*

*regimented that, cause I just believe man that if I'm never able to see a person from my past or if I'm never able to go through an area that I once copped from or used at you know, of course, I don't purposively put myself in those situations, however.*

*Running across those people shouldn't trigger you?*

*It shouldn't. I should be able to identify as a trigger, potential trigger but know that's what it is and it shouldn't in any way affect the decision that I need to make. Because today I realize that life still goes on and I'm going to have these physiological changes and that's okay. But at the end of the day it doesn't mean just because all of this emotional stuff is going on that I need to medicate it. You know, I need to first admit, identify and accept that it's happening and then deal with it accordingly.*

In sum, it appears that there must be an internal change for those who successfully stayed away from drugs and crime.

*Who or what helped you the most to stay away?*

*Me. It had to be all up to me. It definitely had to be me it couldn't be no counselor, it can't be no kids, it was just up to me. I just don't want to or don't want to live that life again that's a miserable life. Eventually its miserable, when I first started off in it I thought it was fun I was young but it's a miserable life. It's like you're locked up in your own prison.*

## **Tools for Change**

### ***Treatment***

*"Honey, I done so many programs.....but they helped save my life."*

As is noted earlier in the Methods section, this sample originated within two studies to evaluate the effectiveness of a therapeutic community (TC) in reducing recidivism and drug use. Data from the original sample combined with the recent arrest data indicate that many of the individuals in the cohort have long histories of chronic substance abuse, involving multiple incarceration and treatment episodes. It is clear that even though many offenders may not have ceased drug use after their first "dose" of treatment, the skills and information imparted within treatment were virtually always relied upon on the road to recovery. While the long term effects of this treatment on increasing the probability of desistance has been documented elsewhere

(Martin, et al, 2011), this section will document how treatment actually facilitated the recovery process when offenders eventually decided that they “were done.”

Many talked about the differential skills they had obtained from the various treatment programs they had been through. Max explained, “[t]reatment helped me define what was going on with me at those different stages of my life....’Reshape’ was good, and we had another group that just followed back on this. But in [Program], when I got in [Program], it was totally different atmosphere, because we were still incarcerated, but we had another safe place to go to, and people were listening. Even if I knew it was artificial....the real world is outside these bars and whatnot, it helped me adapt.” Randy talked about the skills he learned in [Program] fifteen years earlier, “When I left the [Program],....it showed me how I can like weigh things out, put them in like different positions and like weigh them out and analyze what’s good with them. I still use that sometimes, I learned that in the [Program] like ’97 and they talking about you never gonna forget them and you don’t! Because they always come back in your life and then you gotta make the decision how to use them.”

Even when offenders weren’t sincerely seeking help during their first dose of treatment, and only entered because they thought it would reduce their time in prison, the skills and information they learned were still accessed years later to help them when they were finally ready to “be done.” George signed up for programming because he thought it would result in leniency from the judge:

*Yeah that was the ultimate plan, if I go to rehab for a year and maybe the judge will be lenient or the prosecutor will say oh yea, and I did, I did really well and the amazing thing was that while I was in the rehab for a year it started to sink in, I was going to meetings 5 times a day in this rehab and at first I was like this is bull[expletive] I’m just sitting here I’m going to get through this and then all of a sudden it started clicking, everything started clicking. I started associating with the people in the meetings, I started wanting to be like them, and I did, I changed right there and when I went to jail I started going to meetings in jail, I got in programs.*

For many, programming involved the transmission of learning how to do basic life skills and the ability of think about the relationships between behavior and consequences. For many who had grown up in dysfunctional families where addiction was the norm, the transmission of these skills had been absent from their socialization:

*I mean, you need to understand when they introduced that process to me, the therapeutics of it was a savior. It was something totally new. So when I grabbed on I didn't let go. It was like oaky but if you do this, you gotta think about this and you gotta look around the corner. You know what I'm saying. And they taught us how to do that. And they was simple tools, it wasn't nothing you had to dig underground to find. It was right there, they handed it right to you..... Because during that time I thought I lost family, friends, I thought there was nothing else. So it was like they gave me hope that I could continue to live without the use of anything.*

For others, the availability of a therapeutic environment in which they could effectively reconcile their internal issues and emotional concerns was especially helpful. Karen, who had participated in other forms of treatment before, found that this inner work began to lay the foundation for her recovery. She explained, “I did a lot of external work when I was in [Program], but.....but [this time].....everything I did had [to come] from the inside out. I had to ..... write my life story, I had to work on core issues. So that brought some stuff to light. You know, I learned some stuff about myself what makes me tick..... So that had me intrigued for a while, I was beginning to learn who I was. What I liked about myself and what I didn't like so I was discarding some stuff and keeping some stuff.”

Much of this inner work involved healing relationships or trauma from their childhoods. Like several women in our sample, Brianna had been molested when she was a young girl and she had never been able to process her victimization until she had the opportunity for therapy in prison. “I opened up to my counselor when she did my session, for, what was it, one-on-one treatment. And I started talking about my molestation and stuff cause it [drug use] revolved around there. I shut off, I had shut myself off to the world by closing all my feelings in, and

letting ‘em out by getting high, goin’ out, that was my way of releasing, my feelings.” Through therapy, she began to process her victimization and eventually begin to heal. Unfortunately, this type of one-on-one therapy was unavailable to many; even Brianna was provided only a few sessions of individual counseling.

For males in particular, programming that taught them how to positively react within a world where masculine bravado was a must to survive appears to have been particularly beneficial for several respondents avoiding assault charges:

*They helped, they taught me to look at things now. Look at the consequences, you know? Who’s it benefit? Who’s it not benefit? They taught me that I don’t have to react, in a negative way.*

*They had you some life skills it gave you.  
Yea. I don’t have to, like, say nothing bad. I don’t have to do nothing. I don’t even have to walk away. I just don’t have to get involved.*

In addition to treatment in prison, aftercare and 12 step programs, or similar support groups within the community provided support upon release or when individuals needed additional guidance when they were facing stress or difficulty in their lives. “Working the steps and attending the meetings was a safe haven for me. At any given time I could go to the club house, sit and hang out, or I hung out with my sponsor a lot, I hung out with her a lot,” explained Linda. Jeremy similarly finally learned that he needed the support network of NA, “I mean to this point now, I know for a fact that I can’t do this on my own, I have to let other people help me and without Narcotics Anonymous and God that I wouldn’t even be where I’m at now.”

And finally, others who made the decision to get clean outside of the correctional setting utilized community treatment programs. Hailey and her husband were both addicted to heroin when they decided to get clean together. During their first voluntary entry into a drug treatment program, however, Hailey was “not ready” and left:

*When I first went to XXX, I went to the program XXX. And I'm being honest, when I first got there, I was there overnight, I left there the very next day. But my husband stayed, my husband didn't even know I was gone. He didn't know I was gone until a week later. When I called him from Wilmington. I just wasn't ready, but then I went back.*

*What happened at that program that made you know in one day that you wasn't ready and didn't like it? What was going on in your head?*

*I was dope sick, I was like fresh off the street, fresh out the storm you know what I mean and what I should have done was went to detox first instead of just going into a recovery house like that you know. So instead of admitting myself into detox I ran right back to my familiar places, you know, people, places, and things. I did finally get sick and tired..... I called him, called my husband and I said, look I'm ready, I'm coming back, I'm coming back you know what I mean. I said it's time.... When you're tired and you sick and tired, then you know it's time to change some things you know.*

It is important to note that there were a nontrivial number of respondents who either gleaned nothing from groups such as NA or AA, or found them to be counterproductive in their recovery. For example, Marcia found hearing about other people's stories of drug use over and over actually triggered her desire to use. "The meetings were more about, their drug use, it's not about how they stay clean and what they're doing to stay clean it's more focused on what they did and their using. And for a lot of people as myself, that's a trigger. I don't talk about my drug use to anyone today, I mean there's times that I've mentioned it in passing when asked but it's not something that I sit down and talk about. Because remembrance is a big part of addiction. You start with the remembering and then it leads to one thing to another." Joe also attended AA meetings a few times but found them too stressful, "because people talk about war stories and that just makes my stomach bubble. It made me want to get high after because that's all they talked about."

## ***Religion***

*"That's why I'm not in trouble right now because I believe in god."*

There is a great deal of literature documenting the positive effect of religion on recovery efforts. Whether it be Islam or Christianity, it is clear that religion plays an important role for

many when they are on the path to desistance. In our sample, both whites and African Americans relied on the dictates of Christianity, while several African American males relied on Islam. Regardless of the religion, however, summoning God to wash away their past sins and give them strength to stay clean were the mechanisms by which faith helped them on their road to recovery. In fact, the majority who found religion to be helpful acknowledged that it was a tool. “I believe in God so I’m gonna use God. God, I was believe he was like, ‘are you ready? You ready?’ Okay, this is it,” explained Rita, which clearly conveys the decision to reach out to God for help. Similarly, Ben talked about the need for reaching out for help on the road to recovery, “Like there’s nobody else but you but there is somebody, there’s a higher power man. There’s a higher power, I believe in divine intervention and when it don’t work your way you gotta turn to something. Even if you can’t see it you gotta turn to something and believe in it and that’s what I done.” Others talked about the ubiquity of using religion as a tool for change among addicts:

*Now the people that are doing well, nearly every one of them is committed to some faith or what have you so, we’ve heard that a lot. Also we hear change in people, places and things like you said you’re not doing that stuff anymore, you’re not with those people. Right. Would you say those are the keys?*

*Those are some of the keys but the thing is, you can’t help anyone no matter what program you come up with, no matter if, for spirituality you have to be sincere in your heart and then it will work for you. The whole key to people coming out and not going back into drugs and robbery is there heart has to be changed. And the question is how do they change their heart? And like for me it was spirituality. I gave my life to Christ that changed my heart and my thoughts. But for some people, there not ready to change their heart.*

For some, the use of religion was not so much a choice as a heavenly intervention. For example, several talked about getting “saved by the Lord” as the reason for their desistance. However, as can be seen within these narratives, it was actually a decision to reach out for help, and not necessarily Divine intervention. Moreover, most of these calls for help to God were coupled with other “rock bottom” realities, like being labeled a habitual offender for Kyle:



*I'll tell you. I hit rock bottom. I was coming out of the courtroom. They just found me as a habitual offender. I'll never forget it. I was coming out with the handcuffs on and my wife now but she was my girlfriend then, she was saying you'll be alright. I remember getting in the van and the spirit, I don't know, the Lord, something just told me that you gonna be alright but it came over me and I went back to another brother that had been telling me to go to church and I said I'm ready to get saved and that's what I did.*

In fact, for several, reaching out and “giving it to God” was a very emotional event, filled with all the drama one associates with “getting saved” from the literature:

*Oh God, it's like the difference of day and night, you wake up one morning and I look in the mirror and God, I'm so tired, and that's when I surrendered my whole being. Everything. My whole life, not just a part of it. You know how you can do some things, you'll give some things to God but you won't give him everything, you wanna hold on to this big piece just a little bit, thinking you gonna get away with something, but on that day that I gave it all I looked in the mirror at myself and cried like a little baby. God, if I can't do it nobody can, I tell him how he took me out of it, I said I know I was a drug addict, a dope fiend like me, what you want to do with me? I was crying, tears run down my face, this was a crying I'd never felt before in my life, I did that cleansing, what it was that day it was cleansing, everything that I had ever done that I knew he forgive me I could go ahead and live, I would go to church, I had money, take a hundred dollars at a time and put it in the church, because I was scared to take the money because I was scared id take it and go get high, so I'd take the money and go put it in the church on Sunday.*

This narrative illustrates the aid of religion in the transformation process, but it also underscores the mechanism of “cleansing” as well. Not only do the dictates of religion help individuals stay on the road to recovery, but the role of the Holy Spirit in washing away your sins was also a benefit. “[You have to] investigate your spirituality, which is from, the bible, but for other people it's the Quran or some other book of scripture.....And then you have the experience, the encounter, spiritually what I call an encounter with the Holy Ghost...but it wasn't like I got saved and said I'm gonna be a preacher....[but] it removed my guilt of everything I was feeling.”

### ***Getting Legal Work***

It is difficult to work and try to maintain an addiction at the same time. Respondents

indicated that landing stable employment was much easier when they were clean, but landing good employment that paid a decent living wage was available only to those with marketable skills. Of course, many addicts had worked while they were using, and when they returned from prison, a lucky few had those jobs still waiting for them. The majority, however, had to establish new networks and establish their credibility as an employee. Having a record, of course, made finding a job in tough economic times even more difficult. Brent ended up working as a cashier but could not pay his bills so he got a second job as a janitor for a cleaning service. He worked very hard and eventually started making connections and getting cleaning accounts on his own. “I started working a second job which was janitorial which started to give me a little bit more independence, had a couple accounts for myself and I was learning some things that I could make some money for myself on the side.” Similarly, Michael built up his own sheet metal business after working with a guy for several years, “You know he [my boss] upgrades his equipment and I use that [the old equipment]. He’s like, you might be able to use that one day, I send you out on a service call .... And I got a whole trunk full.” Many like Brent and Michael used jobs as stepping stones to get into better paying positions. Like them, Frank got hired by a snow removal company after he left prison and eventually worked up to a high paying construction job. Of course, in these times, these men are the lucky ones.

The majority of women in recovery did not have access to high paying construction work, however, many working in clerical roles did work their way up various employment ladders. For example, Brittany started out as a cashier and eventually advanced to an Office Manager position. Because of the stigma many perceived they carried because of their records, some talked about their passion for doing well on the job, to prove themselves as worthy of advancement. After starting off in an entry position in a chicken processing plant, Lenora worked

hard for advancement, “I mean I started off like everybody else doing the breast plant, the wing machine, you know what I mean? But I just worked my way over to the table. Trying to be the best that I could be, real fast, because I was a drug addict, you know what I mean? I was full force trying to be all I could be type—you know what I mean? Like Lenora, Susan also started her own cleaning company after working for another company, “I always went up and beyond. I got really good at cleaning ovens. I had some money saved over Christmas and January I got on the computer and started doing some research. I did some advertisements playing around. I called and asked how much to advertise a cleaning business and I asked if they were hiring independent contract deliveries and they said yes. I was able to put my flyers inside the Shopper’s Guide. By June I couldn’t take another person.”

Others without marketable skills worked several jobs to stay ahead. Bill’s advice to others looking for work was, “[j]ust take what you can get first, then just work. Because eventually the way I learned was that you get a job, then other opportunities open up for other jobs because you’re already working, and people are seeing you’re already in the mind frame. You’re a good worker..... When I was working for XXX and went on an interview and Gamble on my lunch break. And they hired me, and I went back to Giddy and told them, I said I’ll give you a two week notice or whatever it is. And the guy said ‘why’ and I said I just found a better job..... and then I went to work at the pizza store, while I was driving home I stopped there to get pizza every day. I said ‘Yo Man, ya’ll need any delivery drivers?’ And I had my uniform on and everything and he said you already got a job. I said I’ll work; I’ll work at night if you need me. And I worked that job, too.”

Others had been reunited with their children and couldn’t work two jobs and be there for their families. Many worked at low level service sector jobs for several years until they perceived

their felony records would not matter. Rebecca was a recovering heroin and cocaine addict who used to prostitute and sell drugs to make money for her addiction. When she got clean, she started working as a waitress but she always wanted to work in the health care industry. “It’s been 7 years since I got a felony now I can apply for jobs at hospitals. After I lost the bank job, the last bank job, I started applying for jobs I knew I could get before I had that felony. Cause 7 years had gone by and they don’t look at your felonies too much.”

Still others went from job to job and still work in low level, service-sector jobs, or at temp agencies, barely earning enough to pay their rent. Many start out at fast food restaurants and may work their way up to another upscale restaurant. It’s not glorious, but as Jerome says, “It puts some food on the table.”

### ***Even When It Seems Impossible***

While it is clearly more difficult to stay clean within an environment riddled with unemployment and drugs, those who had come to the “I’m done” point appear to have been able to navigate their risky terrain:

*If you can change the people and have positives instead of negatives then you're alright. Places, if you change the places where you hang at, you can change the things you can do. If you're not on the street you're in a better place and you're not gonna have problems. But you're still gonna be around drugs.*

*I was gonna say, but you're still in the same neighborhood and see the people who have been involved with drugs so how do you do it?*

*See my thing is I just don't hang with those people, like now I just wanna say that I go to somebody's house and be done. Go check on my mom if she alright, check on my brother and see if he's alright, go and see my boy and see if he alright, then 2:30 come and walk to my door and get my kids off the school bus, make sure they do their homework. And then it all starts again [the next day].*

Others who “were done” faced other hurdles in losses, like the death of a parent, divorce, or homelessness, and they still managed to stay clean, because they were “no longer addicts.” For

many, facing these life challenges without resorting to their customary medicinal aid of drugs was a true testimony to their new identity. Charles attests:

*How do you know you're not gonna go back to your old lifestyle?*

*I had no desire for it. It's not an option for me anymore. I'd been put in situations where me and my wife broke up, I was basically out on the streets and I still didn't turn to that. And I believe that was one of the biggest tests because I love my wife. I can sit back and look at my home and say I did this with all positivity, you know there's no illicit drug dealing that bought this gate around my house. No I paid for this, I worked hard for this and I put it up myself and to walk away from that. The majority of men I know that used to be where I was at would have went back there and I didn't.*

*Does it make you feel good to see what your hard work can bring you?*

*That's the best feeling in the world!*

## **ARE THERE TURNING POINTS?**

In two major works, Sampson and Laub (1993; Laub and Sampson 2003) have articulated what they call an age-graded theory of informal social control to explain desistance from crime. A central component of that theory is the notion of a turning point. Conceptualizing an offender's long-term pattern of criminal activity as a trajectory, a turning point is a life event that changes the direction of that trajectory. One who has a stable offending history since adolescence, for example, would have a trajectory of long-term offending if mapped over their life course. This trend or pathway of crime may be deflected by an event in adulthood, such as marriage to a conventional person or securing a stable job, that which serves as a turning point in that offending begins to dramatically decline as a result. In their theory, military service, a good marriage, and a stable job were three turning points that successfully deflected the criminal trajectory of a sample of high risk youth (the Glueck boys). Although this is not discussed at any length, presumably, there could also be negative turning points such as arrest, incarceration, or divorce which deflect a previously conventional trajectory into an offending one. Further,

although Sampson and Laub have found empirical evidence of turning points in the lives of the Glueck boys, it is not clear if this is a historically-specific set of findings since Giordano and colleagues (2002) were not able to find evidence of a work or marriage turning point in their contemporary sample of high risk Ohio youth. In this section, we discuss one potential turning point, the threat of obtaining a habitual offender statute, and then elaborate on the absence of turning points for both marriage/partnership and having children.

### ***Habitual Offender Statutes***

After a life going in and out of jail, several offenders, particularly those who had logged a series of felonies to their record, were facing habitual offender statutes. Under Delaware criminal law, offenders convicted of three separate violent felonies can be declared “habitual offenders” and sentenced to a mandatory term of life in prison without parole; offenders with other nonviolent offenses can see enhanced sentences if they are declared a habitual offender. Several offenders talked about their fear of getting sent to prison for “big time” for their next felony, and the necessity for change. A few others, however, appear to have been cognizant of the habitual offender statute and its threat to them, but it did not appear to deter their drug use or crime. The habitual offender statute and its effect on behavior can be viewed multiple ways. While it can be viewed as a turning point according to Sampson and Laub, or part of life for a “feared self” according to Paternoster and Bushway (2009), it is also clearly related to deterrence theory.

Deterrence theory argues that punishing those who commit crimes has the effect both of preventing crime among currently non- but would-be offenders (general deterrence), and preventing more crime by the one who is punished (specific deterrence). It is the latter which is most relevant for our concern since our subjects have been extensively involved with the criminal justice system with numerous arrests, convictions, and incarcerations. While it has been

presumed that criminal justice sanctions such as incarceration have a specific deterrent effect, a good estimate of exactly how much of an effect that is has been elusive. Generally, reviews of the literature (and some fine ones are Cook 1980, Nagin 1998, 2009, Kennedy 2009, & Kleiman 2009) have concluded that there is at least some specific deterrent effect due to imprisonment, with some heated debate as to the exact magnitude of that effect, what the crime reducing effect of imprisonment can be attributed to (deterrence or incapacitation) and the extent to which it comes with collateral costs.

Some recent research should be highlighted here to place this section within the context of contemporary empirical results. Loughran and his colleagues (2009) examined the effect of incarceration on a sample of 921 high-risk juveniles who had been convicted in juvenile or adult court of a serious felony offense and who were either put on probation or sent to a residential correctional facility. Compared to a counterfactual group, they found that the group incarcerated exhibited a slightly *greater risk* of being rearrested, consistent with a criminogenic effect of residential placement rather than a deterrent effect. They also found that of those placed in a residential facility, there was no difference in self-reported future crimes among those who stayed longer versus those who had a shorter sentence.

A similar study using propensity scoring techniques for data from the Netherlands (Nieuwbeerta et al., 2009) examined the effect of first-time incarceration between the ages of 18 and 38 on conviction rates three years following imprisonment. Of these convicted individuals 1,475 were imprisoned for the first time and 1,315 were convicted by not imprisoned. Results indicated that the experience of being sent to prison increased the risk of a subsequent conviction by almost double compared with those not confined, in other words, confinement was criminogenic rather than a deterrent.

Perhaps most relevant to our findings for enhanced sentences, Helland and Tabarrok (2007) examined whether California's provision "three strikes and you're out" legislation had a deterrent effect on crime. Under the law a criminal with one strike who is subsequently convicted of any felony can have their sentence doubled and may not be released until they have served at least 80% of their sentence. An offender with two strikes who is convicted of a subsequent felony can be sentenced to anywhere from twenty-five years to life, and must serve at least 80% of that sentence. Helland and Tabarrok compared the arrests for two groups of offenders released from California's prisons; the first were released having two "strikeable" offenses while the second group could have had two strikeable offenses (there were two trials for a strikeable offense) but who only had one conviction for a strikeable offense. These two groups were found to be comparable across a variety of different characteristics making them reliable for comparison. The authors (2007: 316) concluded that "[w]e estimate that the threat of a third strike reduces arrest rates by 8.3 percentage points or 17.2 percent." There were no such differences found in the arrest histories of one and two strike offenders in two states that had no three-strike laws, leading Helland and Tabarrok to conclude that the observed reduction in crime was due to the fear of an enhanced sentence upon conviction of the third strikeable offense.

Similarly, for most in our sample, the first incarceration did not appear to affect their behavior; their first incarceration was not their last. Despite the lack of specific deterrence operating initially after the first incarceration, several offenders appear to have weighed the costs and benefits of offending differently after they were faced with possibility of being labeled a habitual offender. In Delaware, offenders are given enhanced penalties following the application this status, often an extra ten to fifteen years added to a sentence, depending on the charge. William articulates this fear well when he was faced with the same judge again and again. "He



gave me thirty years, because I kept on coming back. The judge even told me because I thought he might have forgotten me [but he didn't]. When the judge say you know if I see you here again, he had put a star next to my name and made a little notation. And I knew the next time I come back right, he ain't fooling with me."

Marcia explained that her frequent assault convictions were because of her "anger issues," but after being labeled a habitual offender, she has learned to keep her temper in check. When asked how she does it, she explained:

*Freedom....who wants to be caged in..... The most important decision I have ever made is if, in fact, I get angry, I really need to take a walk cool off and think about different ways that I can solve this problem. Because if I stay there and argue its going to get real detrimental for somebody else's health. Not mine. So I have to walk away. So if in fact I get in that situation again I already know I got eleven years so I'm probably gonna get life. So I walk away cool down.*

Importantly, it is difficult to disentangle the effect of maturation, and the cumulative losses these offenders had already experienced by being in and out of jail, from the deterrent threat of facing enhanced sentences. Within the narratives expressing "fear of sanctions," respondents simultaneously equated the threat with the loss of family and friends that they had already experienced. For example, Ron was facing a habitual offender status for his next felony conviction and he was clearly affected by this:

*But I looked at it like Man, you wrong, you at fault doing what you doing but you going to play yourself and ain't nobody going to be able to get you out. Now I might have got another chance but it might have been fifteen years, or whatever. Yeah [the judge said] next time you come back we going to hit you with – we going to sign this paper, you going to get your habitual - we might give you a break if the lawyer's good, but then after that you know I'm like forty something years old man, I was like no way, I see my grandmother and them and I was like no way. I was done.*

Timothy couples his habitual status with simply getting tired of doing jail time and being separated from his family:

*And my record was, next time you go to jail you gonna get the habitual, so that was it. Somethin' had to stop.*

*So staying out of jail meant more to you then getting high?*

*That's right.*

*Despite as much as you were using, and you had been using for so long, you were able to say, enough's enough.*

*That's right. I was tired.....it was no fun, and I wanted to be out here with my kids. I was tired of hurtin'.*

This narrative reflects a great deal of experiential knowledge with the system and with the collateral effects on your family when you lose in the system. Clearly, facing 10 to 15 years in prison when you are 20 is quite different then facing it at when you are older. As Jaden explained, “[r]ight now they got this habitual thing like that and I don’t know, I don’t got time for it, man I’m 35, I’ll be 35 next month and granted, I never told nobody in my life but I’m never gonna put myself through this [expletive], through 10 or 15 years, you know what I mean because I get 10 or 15 years now it’s over. Life over, game over, I ain’t getting out till I’m 50, 60 years old, come on man. It’s like not even worth it.” Jake similarly reflected, “I don’t have 15 years to give them, I’m 43. I’m actually almost 44, June’s coming. What would that make me 60 years old? No. I’m done. There’s nothing in a bag that’s going to make me feel good enough when I’m sitting in level five for the next 15 years, I’m done, completely.”

While these narratives clearly suggest that facing increased sanctions serve as a deterrent for some, others were not so easily swayed. For them, reconciling a “habitual” status label did not necessarily get them out of the game, but rather only slowed them down at best. In fact, some had learned that a good lawyer could equalize the effects on a habitual stamp. As Mark explains:

*When they came to arrest me on that charge [robbery] it showed back up on the computer when I was in the [Program] program in Georgetown.... and that made me a habitual and they offered me 15 years. And I was like what? That's when I started slowing down when I realized I'm a habitual offender now and I'm looking at not just 6*

*months, a year. I'm looking at 45. There's a difference and that one they offered me 15.....*

*So you thought you were in for 15?*

*So then you were not classified as a habitual at that time?*

*No I still am. You can tell when you're a habitual offender because your file is red. Your file when you go to court, they have the stack of folders, and if yours is red or with a red seal you're a habitual.*

*So tell me what it was like getting out at that time you're an habitual even though the charges were dropped?*

*I don't think I've been in trouble since, no, no I got in trouble one more time after that, that was the burglary second and then that's it.*

Importantly, while these offenders decreased their street activities after being labeled a habitual offender, this new status and the stigma that came with it, did compel them to stop using drugs. For these addicts, the habitual status deterred offending patterns to the extent that they were required to try harder to get their drug money through legal means, and make themselves less visible on the street. Michael stated, "the habitual slowed me down some....I work and make my money now but I still use." Similarly, Joe relates his experience with being labeled a habitual:

*I'm now a habitual offender; she said [the judge] if you ever come back in front of me with a felony Mr. XX I want you to understand I'm going to give you life. Have a good life, your free now.*

*So have you committed any other crime after this to get time, or was it all just violations?*

*Just violations [of parole]. That's the story of my life.*

Randy quit selling drugs when he faced habitual status, but he couldn't kick crack:

*It's a different thing because through my past, all the times that I've used, I'm selling. This time, I'm not selling. And I was out there on the street, now I'm not on the street. But it doesn't make a difference, you still need it [crack], you know.*

*How long have you ever been clean? Longest you've been clean?*

*Oh god. I don't think it's been a year at one time. I would say about 6-8 months.*

*And now we've talked about that earlier, do you think you use because you like to use or do you think you use because you have to use? Like, if you don't use, what happens with your head or your feelings or your emotions?*

*Um if I don't use, I'll call it like demons enter in my head and I think about some things that happened in the past that wasn't right. So when I use, it makes me feel like, I don't think about how uncomfortable I am, I guess.*

*You think there is another way to get rid of the demons?*

*Yeah, I mean, I do pray a lot.*

Heroin was also too much to kick for Brendan, even though he was facing a habitual stamp the next time he was convicted of a felony:

*Cause I hate it [heroin], 'cause I love it. I love heroin, but...*

*It's not done anything good for you.*

*It's all, yea, it beat me up too much. Plus, I'm like, the next time I get in trouble I'm done. Habitual offender, no doubt. I'm not doing no, I don't like jail. I mean I've been in jail a lot, but a lot less. I've gotten, I've been so lucky.*

*Yea, I've seen people with a lot more time for a lot less.*

*And I've weaseled my way out of lots and lots of things.*

*You don't wanna go to jail?*

*I ain't built for that long stint. I'm not saying I wouldn't be alright if I had to do it, but I don't want to. Like I got the opportunity not to do it, so why would I pick that? A, I'm picking that choice. I'm just really adamant right now. I mean, like I'm scared, yea.*

In addition to those living in the community, we also interviewed a few respondents who were in work release, but had been labeled “habitual,” and were facing a bleak future indeed. As Cameron explains,

*I'll be 55 next year, you know what I mean. I shouldn't... Sometimes, I think it's over. Part of my life, you know, I messed it up, and I can't get all that time back. So, you know what I mean, when I leave here, I'm not gonna do no hard work. I'm not. I can't. But I know I got to do something, versus going back out here and start stealing again. Stealing or doing something illegal to get money. 'Cause the next time, you know what I mean, it's... And another thing, that I was skipping jail time for, like now, I got, if I pick up another felony, I'm done. So I said, okay, well... That's why I started picking up misdemeanors. If I don't pick up no felony, then I won't be a habitual criminal. But now, the judge told me I'm facing a career criminal. So, I'm done, man. I'm done. I'm done.*

*Well why are you done?*

*I'm tired, I'm tired. At this stage in my life, I could truly say, I'm tired.*

*Tired of what, though? 'Cause you said, like, a half hour ago, that going to jail didn't matter.*

*Yeah, then it didn't matter, you know what I mean? These last few years, I think it kinda broke me. And especially being in... When I was here, years ago, back in '93, it was, maybe guys my age and maybe a little... now, man, it's a bunch of guys, man. They callin' me "old head," and "shut up" and you know what I mean?*

*No respect?*

*Yeah, no respect. Most of these guys in here now, I'm old enough to be their father, you know what I mean? I ain't, I ain't... I shouldn't be there. But I did it, so I got to deal with it, until they let my max out in December. So, in order to get out of here, you got to have a job...*

*Or you're gonna max out?*

*You got to have five hundred dollars in the bank. It's either that, or max out. So that means, when I make the phase, which I'll be on the next test and probably next week, to get to Phase 3. I leave here two days a week to go look for a job. Everybody goes down here to deal with. And, you know what I mean, with the economy the way it is now, you know, it's picking up a little, but it's still a lot of guys in here that's on Phase 3 now that's not working. I think now, we got maybe almost 30 guys that's on Phase 3, and of the 30, it's only, maybe 10, 15 of them that got jobs. And everybody's going to the same place. So by the time I make Phase 3 to go look for a job, I'm just going to some of the places everybody else is going to, not unless I know somebody out there that's got a job, that's willing to hire me. Which I don't.*

This narrative clearly illustrates the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that face an offender with a long rap sheet and no marketable skills, particularly in these unforgiving economic times. For some, it is truly a hopeless situation, particularly if they have lost their parents or other relatives who had supported their reentry effort(s) in the past.

It is also necessary to point out that a few offenders talked about the alternatives to going back to jail. This included a violent response to another arrest in their future. Tom explains,

*I came to the conclusion when I was in jail that one, I wasn't good at getting high, two, I wasn't good at crime..... Three, I didn't have nothing and I was tired of not having*

*anything, tired of living the way I live. So I began to ask myself questions, 'what can I do to not repeat that [going to jail]. Cause for me jail was one of the things where I didn't get along. I didn't get along, it wasn't a good experience, I didn't like it. As a matter of fact I said I will never have to do this again. Whether that meant at the time, getting out doing something else, and not getting caught or get caught and taking it to the final which means probably a shoot out or something and I never shot anybody. But I knew I wasn't going to come back to jail.'*

Fortunately, Tom found his way, and has been drug and crime free for 2 years.

And finally, it is important to reiterate that very few offenders were deterred by their first time in jail. In fact, for most, it was just part of their life of crime, something they had to deal with, nothing more, and nothing less. However, a handful of respondents did make the conscious decision that their first incarceration was going to be their last. Leonard, who had done time in a juvenile detention facility, describes his reaction to his one bid in adult prison, "Usually they say people that get in trouble they stay in trouble. It took one time for me, in adult prison anyway to say the heck with it I'm done." In this case as with the majority of the others who quickly desisted, however, addiction did not appear to be a problem in their lives. For example, James, who also stopped using drugs upon his first release explains, "I mean anything I ever done, I could always control them. I mean, I can do with them, or I can do without. I mean even my hallucinogenic [drugs], I mean a lot of people can't [control them]. I can control even that. I can handle the alterations that are done to your mind." Many of those who were able to stay away from drugs and crime after their first incarceration often perceived their jail time as a blessing. "I don't know what would have happened to me if I hadn't ended up in jail," offered Dustin.

## ***Partnership and Marriage***

Sampson and Laub (1993) contend that a stable marriage is one of the key factors associated with desistance. Our interview narratives reveal that a pro-social partner often facilitated or assisted in an offender's road to recovery, but we found very few instances in which partners actually represented turning points in that they *initiated* the change. For example, pro-social partners who remained committed to the fractured relationship while their partners were still using and in and out of jail were often acknowledged by offenders as important in the desistance process. In addition, several offenders met pro-social partners after they had already desisted and made the decision that they "were done." Moreover, even for those who acknowledged that their partners were very helpful on their road to sobriety, these do not reflect true turning points since their partners had been with them through years of addiction. For example, Aaron's wife stuck with him in and out of jail and through his recovery, but while he acknowledges this support, he also attributes his sobriety to his age and declining health. When he talked about his battle with remaining sober, he acknowledged his wife was a big help; he felt a responsibility to her because she had been with him through many incarcerations. However, when asked about his resolve to stay sober, his personal resolve and health issues were also evident:

*How are you doing that [staying away from alcohol]? Cause you're secluded, you don't have any friends, you don't have a support system, how are you staying clean?*

*I just refuse to pick up, and I'm more concerned about my health now. Even though I've contracted hepatitis, somewhere along the line, I'm on pain medications, so...*

*So most of your injuries, was that from in the street or prison?*

*Both. Just made my mind up, I'm going to take the best care of my wife as I can. Try and be here for her as long as I can.*

Of course, many offenders' partners living alongside them through years of addiction

eventually gave their troubled partners an ultimatum, which some respondents associated with their decision to get clean. “[My wife] drank in the beginning of our relationship and then uh, she just stopped, it got old, my drinking got old. I would do crazy things, sometimes I wouldn’t even come home. Was out there on the streets again and uh, she told me I had to make a decision. Either stop drinking or our marriage was over,” recalled Thomas.

Importantly for the identity theory of desistance, in the majority of narratives, offenders still emphasized that they were ready for the change. Anthony had been in and out of jail for over twenty years and had already had kids and a family. He met a girl he fell in love with, but still continued to hustle and use, but during the last incarceration, he made a decision to get clean. In his story, he attributes a great deal to his new girlfriend, but it is also clear that moves toward an intentional identity change occurred first:

*I just started feeling like I was too good for that [expletive]. You know, like looking at crack heads and stuff and I didn’t want people to think of me like that you know?*

*So, so you think that this last bit was the first time that you really looked? I mean, what made you tired, cause I know you had a lot of, I don’t know, but maybe you had a lot of positive things said to you? I mean, what made you listen this time you think?*

*Just tired man, that pain outweighed the pleasure. The, I just got tired of [expletive] being in jail and doing everything. I mean, the first 10 years, this [expletive] didn’t bother me, I’d go to jail and the other folks would be like what’s wrong? You act like you’re happy to be here or so it didn’t bother me at all. I don’t know why, I can’t swing it, but, this last bit just hurt me bad.*

*Well, well you weren’t with your girl, no. I mean...*

*I mean, it might be the girl that kept me doing good, you know, maybe I had something to stay clean for. Obviously I never did it for myself or my kids.*

*I’m trying to figure out why you listened this time?*

*Well, I mean that was the first time I actually tried to change, you know, I never tried to change before.*

*But I picked that book up myself, and ain’t nobody made me do it, I picked it up trying to help myself.*



## ***Parenting***

Extant literature discussing the relationship between parenthood and desistance from crime and drug use is equivocal at best. Most of the research that does exist examines motherhood's relationship with such behaviors as drinking, smoking marijuana, or overall delinquency. Virtually no studies have examined the relationship between parenthood and serious drug addiction (For exception, see Robbins, Martin, & Surratt, 2009).

Virtually every person we interviewed who had children wanted to be a good parent to their children. However, having children stopped almost no one in our sample from using drugs, while others even attributed their substance abuse and offending patterns to the stress that accompanies parental responsibility. Cecile illustrates how heightened holiday season parental stress prompted her inclination to steal:

*Tell me what you did in that 9 months after you got out. When you felt you were getting into a bind.*

*When I felt me slipping?*

*Yes.*

*Oh, what did I do? I reacted on all of my behaviors. I did everything but pick up the actual drug, but I couldn't see it no other way...For instance, all my old behaviors kicked in, my mind frame began to change again and sometimes you can actually sit there and feel when your inner self is like fighting, fighting but, it didn't fight hard enough.*

*You gave in?*

*Yes. Because I didn't want to have my kids without.*

*Is it because it was the holiday time coming up and bills and bills?*

*Me and my husband was separated, I had no job, that little unemployment check wasn't enough. So it was amongst everything. Everything that was occurring in my life right then and there.*

While several women made an effort to stay clean while they were pregnant, the majority eventually went back to using. Getting their children taken away by the state or having to have other family members care for their children was often a difficult reality for these parents, but

they simply perceived that they did not have a choice, especially when they were sent to prison.

The majority who had missed out on their children's young lives were extremely regretful. Barret explains that the only thing he needed was "getting high" when his children were young, "I remember my daughter saying to me that, you know, I hate you and I was like you think I really care, you don't, you don't care about nobody when you're like that. I loved my wife, I mean I love her, but I didn't give a [expletive] about her, I didn't, I didn't care about me, you know. But she had to put up with this all the, you know, the drunken, drug addict [expletive]. It's, thank God it's over with, you know."

Ashton underscores the necessity of "wanting to change" for yourself, not for anyone else, including children. His wife had always pleaded with him to get off drugs for their children, but that never worked. He describes, "You gotta wanna change. I told my mom, I can't change for my daughter or my son, I gotta change for me. I gotta make my life better because if I'm miserable, they're gonna be miserable so why would I do it for them? She keeps telling me do it for my kids, I can't do it for them."

Still many addicts perceived themselves as functioning, effective parents. Lisa had her daughter when she was 16, and after high school she worked to support her daughter. When she was 26, she was introduced to crack by a friend and became addicted. She was able to keep her job and only use on weekends and still care for her daughter:

*When you were on just the weekends so you had your daughter, how were you able to care for her? How did you carry out her needs you know what I mean?*

*Well I didn't spend all my money on that. I mean, I took care of my house and home first. I bought and made sure we had food, I paid my car payment, I paid my trailer payment.*

*So you were functional, you was handling it? What about leaving the daughter? Did you have to like put her, like when you got high did you have to make sure like one of your sisters were watching her or your mom or whatever?*

*Well most of the time she'd be in her room playing.*

*Oh okay, 'cause she wasn't a baby at this point.*

*I had a big trailer. No, yeah she was. I had her in 78 and this happened in 86 so she was about 8 years old. Yeah, yup. Or I'd be getting one of her friends to come over, you know I'd be in my bedroom you know I'd go in there and get me a hit and then I'd come back out and you know [give them lunch].*

While Lisa was able to sustain this routine for several months, her addiction eventually led to daily use and her pay check could no longer support her habit. She started shoplifting and then forging checks, which led to her first arrest and incarceration, and then the forfeiture of her daughter. Lisa's mother raised the child and her daughter was an adult well before Lisa got clean.

Samuel was a cocaine user who was employed, fell in love, got married and then had a daughter. Not unlike Cecile mentioned earlier, once familial expenses began to accumulate and compete with the costs of his drug habit, Samuel turned to stealing from his employer and was eventually arrested. His daughter and wife moved back in with his mother-in-law.

Tabatha was married with 3 children and a good job in the legal profession, but after a friend introduced her to crack, she became addicted and soon started writing bad checks to support her habit. As is the case for many respondents from our sample, Tabitha's children eventually ended up in their grandmother's care. When asked what she was thinking about parenthood at that time she replied:

*The process is that my kids are with my mom and I know that they hate me, I want to be with them but....but...I like getting high and I'm not ready to give that up. They'll be ok. They are safe. My mom's got them.*

*But how about going back to jail again?*

*I'll do it different. I won't get caught. I won't write checks. I'll support my habit another way and my way then became doing tricks.*

Tabatha eventually got clean but not before she had lost everything. Colleen was in a similar situation, and her mother also took her children away after she ended up on the street selling drugs and turning tricks. She realizes she caused them a great deal of emotional harm but

during her addiction, she appeased her guilt by sending them money, which she believed would somehow fulfill her obligation as a mother:

*If I turned a trick or whatever and their birthday was coming I would go turn the trick or double that amount of money or sell that crack cocaine and send them some money. I figured as long as I sent them money, they were okay. I felt as long as I sent money then everything will be okay, you know..... I always missed my kids, always, always missed my kids but the drugs just wouldn't let me stop. And then I knew that they were taken care of anyway cause they were with my family.*

For some, continued substance abuse while working and parenting appear to have been routine, until the addiction escalated and they were compelled into property crime, or some other risky situation. For example, Loren appears almost defiant when asked how it was possible to hold down a fulltime job and take care of 2 kids while using cocaine and drinking:

*And who's taking care of your kids while this is going on?*

*I was, my kids always been with me.*

*But while you're at work or while your high?*

*They go to daycare and I take care of my kids whether I was high or not.*

*And working. how was that like?*

*Go to work, get paid, go pay the bills, and get high.*

For others, selling drugs on the street was the only way to make a living, at least a living wage that gave them the lifestyle they wanted and allowed for the only means of financial efficacy to which they had access. When asked if she ever thought about the consequences hustling on the street may have had for her children, Dynasty, who at one time abused both cocaine and heroin, replied, “[n]o, because that was our way of surviving.” She went on to say that when her teenage son moved in with her she stopped using coke because it was cutting into her profits:

*So once I stopped, things got so much better, all I was doing was my heroin you know selling that.*

*You're selling and using?*

*Mhmm.*

*So you really weren't clean. Clean is when you're not –*

*Right, right, right.*

*Alright that's okay, I just wanted to make sure.*

*But I was clean from the coke because that's what was taking everything. You know we couldn't really make a profit you know because the cocaine – see with heroin you could just lay back and chill, with coke you going to be ripping and running all night, spending your money. So I stopped and it was a good thing I did because I had to take [my son] to school.*

Despite the drug use, many respondents' narratives illustrate the importance of being a good parent, and that, for most, was an extremely important part of their lives, despite their full-time substance addiction. Melissa talked about not having a good childhood and wanting desperately to be a good mother to her two children. When she had her first son, she was extremely addicted and her mother was the primary caregiver of her child. When she had her second child, she was a functional user, and was providing for her two children even though she still "dabbled with drugs." Because she never had a baby picture of herself while growing up, making sure her two children felt equally loved was important to her, and displaying equally sized pictures of each was part of that demonstration:

*My mother wasn't so good and I worked really, really hard at being a mother. I thought about what I said to my kids. When I was growing up there was a picture of my brother and picture of my sister but no picture of me as a baby on the wall. I grew up in that house for 12 years with no baby picture of me and it really bothered me. I told my mom about it and she said it was not a big deal. She said when you get to your third child it isn't that big of a deal. And I said no, no to me it was a big deal. My kids are 8 years apart and because I was in my addiction when I had my son I had to root through some pictures to find his baby picture so when I had my daughter I had money, a house and a job and her picture was not allowed to go on the wall until I took a little wallet sized picture and blew it up to 8X11 so that both pictures went up on the wall at the same time.*

Despite their addictions, to many we talked with, being a mother or a father was one of the most important roles in their lives.

Unfortunately, several offenders lost custody of their children to the state and had no idea where they currently were, while others had lost contact with their children because either their children or their children's guardians had broken contact with them. However, the majority appear to understand that it was in their children's best interest. Gloria was a teen mother and although she started working after high school, she eventually started running with the "wrong crowd" and was introduced to heroin. When addiction set in, her mother and step-father adopted her son and she eventually ended up on the streets. She's been arrested many times for possession or prostitution and still uses. When asked how she feels about her son being raised by her mother she states:

*It's fine because he's healthy and they took care of him. I mean he knows I'm his mother, he knows we look just alike. But my parents raised him. And it was cool because they had the stable home and the jobs and they were secure. And I couldn't provide that and they could. I appreciate them just taking over the responsibility that should have been mine.*

Still others were extremely distraught and embittered when family members or ex-partners kept their children from them. For example, Marilyn is an alcoholic and after three DUIs and three prison terms, her daughter's father took custody and moved to another state. Marilyn was devastated and has been in a court battle for custody since she was released because the father is not complying with visitation procedures, "I've had to fight tooth and nail for everything." Similarly Tammy has been in and out of prison and is still addicted to drugs. Before her last incarceration, her ex-husband took the children and moved to another state and has not encouraged them to stay in contact with her:

*My one daughter I had many issues with, so to me it was regardless of what I did.....we were never going to have a relationship. She's daddy's girl, she can't see past daddy regardless of what he's done to us and [my other daughter] always had my back*

*regardless what anybody would say about me, you know, that's my mom and blah blah blah. And then just before I [moved back here], I had gotten an email from her and .... she says I hate to say this because I always I had your back, but she says the way I feel now you're just my biological mom. They sent me a card and she says, 'Hi mom, at least this is all we can do for you, peace.' And that was it, and I was pissed but then I was like, they're done, they're tired, and I told them just before I got locked up last time I said I'm coming to get you and they're like nah, we will never come back to Delaware, we don't want to come back to all this again.*

For some, having children didn't stop their drug use, but as the years went on, if they were able to stay together and function as a family unit, having children and not being able to take care of them as they wanted to was part of the "continued string of failures" that they perceived as a catalyst to transform. Debbie was a teen mother who gave up her first child for adoption because she was living on the street and couldn't care for the child. She met her husband when she was in her 30s and thought they would not be able to have children because of all of drug use, but "miraculously, God blessed them with children." Both she and her husband were occasional drug users and had a few brushes with the law that resulted in parole. The most recent incident in which police came to the house and arrested them both and threatened to take their kids was a wake-up call. "My brother came and got the kids but you know the oldest one, she saw the cops and got all upset and that woke me up. I said I can't do this to my kids."

And finally, for many, having children later in life after their first children were young adults, or having grandchildren, gave them a second chance at parenthood. Melvin, who has several grown children with his first wife, also had a son with another woman with whom he is now living. Although he still uses cocaine occasionally and drinks, he doesn't want to miss out on his son's life the way he missed out on the lives of his other children because of his incarcerations. "I've been locked up so many times in my life I've missed so much of my daughters growing up time and I don't want to miss that with my son."

Similarly, because of her addiction, Nakia was not able to be involved in the lives of her

first two sons. However, when her last son was born, she began to realize the value of parenting and it was part of the mechanism through which she decided she did not want to be an addict any longer:

*I took on a new leaf. Because I seen how life is with having your children in your life, and them not being, than having them out of your life. And like I said, I never had an opportunity to raise my oldest son, I had a limited opportunity to raise my next oldest son, but I never, I had the most wonderful experience raising my nine year old. And since I took on that new leaf, when she was born, I learned to be more responsible, because I stopped being so selfish. It's not about me. It's about my offspring. And if I wanted to leave a legacy, that legacy is what I want to leave. It's in my offspring. So I need to be a model more, and that's why I try to be a model for kids.*

Grandchildren also provided many of our respondents with a second chance – an opportunity to get parenting “right.” Sharon was in and out of prison for much of her adult life and her mother got custody of her daughter. When she got clean, however, she was there for support when her daughter had her first child and recalls the joy it brought her, “I’m there with her [daughter] and I’m helping her raise her kids now. And you know what she told me? You know I’ll tell you what she told me cause my mother had guardianship of her when I was doing all my mess and right before my birthday, she told me, she said mom you wasn’t there for me when I was coming up, but I was taken care of..... but I’m glad you’re here now. Cause now is when I really need you, girl tears just started rolling down my..... And that made me feel some kind of good, you hear me?”

Of course, many had to convince their adult children that they were truly done and would not relapse again. Chris talked about coming home from Florida, ready to get clean, even though she thought her daughters would never accept her back into their lives again:

*All I wanted was that relationship with my family again. Because really I didn't think I was going to get it back that time, I thought ok I lost them forever I've done really put a lot of hurt on them and all but my one daughter, my middle daughter, now when I first came home I was with my younger daughter and I stayed with her, I babysat, they paid me to babysit the grandbabies when they worked, but my middle daughter was still iffy iffy because she didn't want me to come in her life and leave again because she always felt that I abandoned her. No matter what, when I left I abandoned her but after about 4 months of being in there she started coming around and we*



*got that bond back and now I'm living with my son, they just bought a 5 bedroom house and 4 bath and that's where I'm living, and they have a little daycare and I babysit all of my little grandbabies and they pay me and that's what I do.*

Because Chris had tried and failed before, she was surprised that it was not very difficult after she had finally made up her mind that she “was done.” “I really thought it was gonna be hard but I made up my mind that that’s not how I wanted to live anymore. Yanno because if I think back of all the times, I’ve had guns put to my head, the lifestyle I was living, I’ve been put in the worst situations that anyone could be in, I shouldn’t even be sitting here right now.”

## **HARM REDUCTION**

*“Yeah it’s all self control. About being a responsible addict.”*

The philosophy of “harm reduction” in drug policy debates uses a public health approach to drug use with the emphasis primarily on reducing the risks and harms associated with illicit drug use, not on criminal intervention (McBride et al. 2009). The concept emerged in the Netherlands when they initiated needle exchange programs in 1984 (Inciardi & Harrison, 2000), and the history of harm reduction has largely been focused on policy changes to keep drug addicts healthy, rather than as a mechanism for desistence from crime. Here we take the concept further to incorporate moving from a high and harmful rate of offending to a lower less harmful rate that, while not truly complete desistence, results in both a better life for the individual as well as an increase in public safety.

Recall that we classified individuals as “harm reducers” if they had once been addicted to hard drugs like cocaine and heroin, and now only drank alcohol or used marijuana. It is important to remark that harm reducers appear to have made the same conscious decision as desisters to reduce their involvement in drug use and crime to remain safer, stay healthier, or stay out of prison. The majority of respondents who were “harm reducers” used alcohol or marijuana

to reduce stress or alleviate pain. Interestingly, virtually all of those classified as harm reducers did not perceive marijuana as a harmful drug. For example, a typical reply from a harm reducer to the question, “So are haven’t used drugs this year?” would be, “No. I’m just smoking marijuana. I don’t do no cocaine or no heroine, none of that.” In fact, many users perceived drug or “dope” use to include substances other than marijuana. For example, Lisa describes her perception of “getting high” did not include marijuana use:

*I didn’t smoke coke I still smoked some weed so I never thought smoking weed was getting high so I never considered it that. so when I told people I’m not getting high I just smoked weed, I thought in my mind as long as I’m not smoking coke I’m not getting high. Until now I know a drug, is a drug, is a drug, is a drug. But a lot of people misconstrued that all the time cause that’s what I believed for years.*

The majority of harm reducers were employed and functioning in their family roles and perceived their continued substance use as recreational, leisurely, deserved, and relatively normal. Jayden stated, “I used to always tell my counselor at Brandywine counseling and my parole officer when they sent me to Brandywine counseling for counseling down there, I used to always tell them I always feel disadvantage because I go out and work hard every day. I come home, I deal with the situations of life but I don’t have nothing to come back and relax with where the average person may come back and get a six-pack of beer. Even though I know the weed ain’t legal but I’m saying people need something to come down on.....” Tara also describes his functional life after his cocaine desistance:

*I was sick and tired of the lifestyle; I was sick and tired of doing cocaine period. Now I still drink and I still smoke Marijuana, and I know that’s the gateway I know all about that, but I’ll tell ya, you can’t get me to put no crack cocaine in my mouth, and I don’t want it nowhere near me. It just took so much from me. But other than that I still have a nice home, I have a new husband.*

Other were still trying to get their lives together, and marijuana or alcohol use was the last thing to go. After two decades of prostitution and crack addiction, Dianne perceived herself

as staying clean and having a normal social life:

*Yeah this recent past year yes, since I've had my own place, I haven't had to prostitute, I got the social security.....I have money for cigarettes and clothes, hygiene products. And you've been clean ever since?*

*Yes, well I still smoke marijuana.*

*No crime?*

*No crime, I pay my fines every month, do the fine thing, and I go to YMCA three times a week.*

*What's that for?*

*Swimming, I have a yearly membership, I swim Mondays Wednesdays and Fridays, I take soul line dancing on Tuesdays and I take some on Thursdays, and I'm just a very social person, I go to church every Sunday.*

Still others clearly had their lives together and smoking marijuana was just an occasional way to chill out. Although he used to do heroin, Steve has a full time job with benefits, with a wife and grandkids he sees frequently. He explains his marijuana smoking behavior:

*Like a month ago.*

*When was the last time you smoked weed?*

*What's the pattern pretty much?*

*Only when we went away. We would go away and I'd smoke. Then at home I'm always too busy doing something. [I usually smoke] when we would go away.*

*Like on vacation?*

*Like we would go camping and we would smoke. Then it got to a point where me and my girlfriend would smoke after work.*

*They don't do any type of drug testing where you work?*

*Yea but they never drug tested me.*

*Nothing else just weed?*

*Just weed. Other than that I have a boring life. Just go to work and sit with my grandkids. Like my daughter she'll drop em off whenever. Or sometimes I don't do nothing.*

Many like Steve are aware of the consequences of using marijuana, and appear to be able to turn the use on and off as needed. For example, John talked about smoking a few times a month when

he is not working so he can “sit back and watch TV.” However, he stopped smoking weed when he was in between jobs and he was afraid of being drug tested if he found a new job that required it:

*I would say [I smoke marijuana] a couple times a month because during the time when I was unemployed, I didn't do anything because I said if somebody got me, I wanna make sure I pass the drug test so I didn't mess with anything as far as marijuana for a while. I always did marijuana but I don't abuse it like that now. I'll do it every now and then. That stuff is also not the same. I remember when I was working with XXX, I had smoked with a few guys on the job and it made me paranoid and I didn't like that feeling so I stopped smoking marijuana for a while. But like I said, every now and then, I might take a few. I only need like 2 pulls or something like that.*

It would be difficult to argue that respondents like Steve, John, or Dianne represent a threat to society. Moreover, other harm reducers use marijuana for pain relief, which may be illegal in Delaware, but is in several states in the U.S. For example, Xavier admitted that he still used marijuana for pain:

*Okay, so if you had to calculate a time frame since the last time that you used any type of drugs?*

*Well I'm gonna you, I smoke marijuana. I do smoke marijuana.*

*Okay, okay. And how often do you do that? everyday?*

*No. I smoke maybe three times a week. Yup. And I only smoke it because sometimes my medication gets me nauseous. And that's all I do. And I don't smoke the blunts, just roll little tiny joints. And I might take a couple puffs and put it out. I might roll a joint and it'll last me all week. It will because I just puff it and put it out. Because I just don't need that much. I use it just to relax me from my nauseous.*

In fact, when medical professionals became aware of their patients use of marijuana for pain relief, they appear to have been less than discouraging, particularly if they were cognizant of the other substances their patients may have turned to. Ethan talked about his doctor's response to his confession marijuana use. “And my doctor say, well one of my four doctors says, ‘Well Ethan, I'd rather you put that marijuana in your system besides that other stuff [crack or cocaine]

because the marijuana has chemicals that help you in other ways, where that other stuff will turn your health around 360 degrees.””

## **PERSISTERS – THOSE STILL IN THE GAME**

*“I’m not ready. When I feel like I’m ready...I’ll do it.”*

*“I like getting high I just don’t like the consequences.”*

Even after an average of 15 years post-release for this cohort of drug involved offenders, a vast majority were still using drugs. A small percent were still engaged in criminal enterprise, primarily crimes motivated by financial gain to buy drugs, or in and out of jail because of technical violations. Interestingly, the majority of this cohort had been clean at various times in the lives. Most had gotten clean while doing time in prison, and many willfully got clean for months at a time while on the outside, but simply could not sustain the routine.

The majority of these individuals had been exposed to treatment at various times in their lives, but they were simply not ready to stop using. Doug articulates this well:

*I’ve been to drug programs already and ain’t nothing that they really could tell me to make me wanna quit.*

*Right, that’s a matter of you doing it on your own; all they do is give you the tools.*

*That’s what I was telling you – the whole time in the program, I was trying to explain this to them, I said listen, everything you’re trying to teach me, it’s not really pouring light where I wanted; it’s up to me when I wanna quit. When you get tired, you get tired. Some people hit rock bottom and then they quit and some people just quit.*

Most of the users have pushed their use behind closed doors and obtained their money through conventional means, either because getting another felony is too risky for them or because they have simply aged out of the hustling game. Several live with family members or boy/girlfriends and earn money in conventional jobs or through charity or disability income, while many others work in an underground. “I get \$675 a month [from SSI] and most of that

goes towards the rent.....and also in my neighborhood I'm a handyman and I got about 5 yards of grass I cut, so I do make money plus I make cars plus I got other things I do to keep money in my pocket, but I [expletive] that money up.....I get \$34 in my pocket and I decide I wanna get one [a hit of crack],” Bill described. Judy lives with her daughter and babysits her grandchildren and a few other kids. She has stopped shoplifting but still gets high when she can on the weekends, when she has enough money and doesn't have responsibility for her grandchildren.

Jeremiah has served a few prison terms for possession with intent to distribute, but because of his connection with big drug dealers, he has never had a problem getting access to the heroin he needs for his addiction. He's primarily a runner in the drug business so he rarely gets caught up in the game. As such, he doesn't encounter many obstacles when he needs to shoot up, even though he considers himself an addict and would like to get clean someday. His easy access to heroin is one of the main reasons he keeps using, “one of the main reasons we use all the time is because he [friend] has it. So far it's working man, it is.”

Jarod similarly talked about his release from prison and a rehab program, and after being clean for almost two years, it wasn't long before he was back in the game, “It wasn't my time. I wasn't ready. I didn't know to do anything different. Even as an adult, I really didn't, it didn't dawn on me. And another thing I'm gonna say is that I didn't know that I had the capability of doing anything else different, you know what I mean when I say that?”

### ***When the Job Goes Away***

*“I know for a fact though, if I'm working and it's a nice check and I can pay the bills and stuff like that, I'm alright. I wanna dodge the game 'cause I be content, that's all I ever wanted to do, was have a nice job.”*

As noted above, several users who had made the identity change had successfully navigated an environment riddled with drugs without a job or a living wage. However, others

were not so lucky. Clearly, losing a job when you have a family to support can add extreme stress to your world and do untold damage to your psyche, especially for the men in this sample who obtained a great deal of their esteem from providing for their families. Leonard had been clean for several years, working a good job with benefits, and providing for his wife and kids. He described how he got such a good job with his record, “the people I was working with liked my work but Human Resources was giving them a problem because of my background.....I told [the President of the company] the story about my life and said he said, man, I think everybody deserves a second change and he gave me a shot.” When he was laid off, he was devastated, he had not only lost a job, he lost the one opportunity he had been given. “And I was a bitter man, I was hurt, can’t say no more than that about it,” Leonard described. After applying to many other jobs, he was unsuccessful and when the unemployment ran out, he started selling drugs to make money and using for an escape. He stated, “I just totally like, just lost....just gave up.” Unfortunately, Leonard’s story was the same for several in this cohort who were still using.

Tony joined the local union and goes down every morning to see if some works come around, but he says his number is far down on the list, he will probably never get hired. This recent stint of unemployment has resulted in drug use once again, “It’s getting me frustrated once again because I can’t find employment and I’m used to working. I been using heroin and cocaine periodically, but not as much...it ain’t an everyday thing, only when I got a few dollars.”

Many respondents secured employment through a temporary agency upon release from prison or work release, but for most, employment was only a short contract and the paychecks eventually stopped. The majority in this position can list numerous places of employment:

*Where were you working when you were in the [program]?*

*XXXXXXX Company.*

*What were you doing there?*

*Picking up garbage.*

*How long did you work there after the [program]?*

*About three months then the assignment was over. It was through a temp agency.*

*And then where did you go?*

*I was hunting jobs...*

*Do you remember going to any place specific?*

*I remember going to [fast food restaurant].*

*Was that for a couple weeks?*

*That was for like a month.*

*Do you remember where you went after that?*

*To the corner. Start pumping and hustling.*

Carla put it very succinctly, ““I know everybody that’s out here robbing people ain’t doing it just because they like to do it. I mean they doing it because they don’t have any other means of money. The employment rate is like real [expletive]ed up right now.”

*And I had a job. I was working. Her stepdad got me a construction job. You know I was paying the bills and stuff and probably like 6 months after we had moved out there I had got laid-off. It was people out there selling, doing everything. So it was either me getting kicked out on the streets or getting back into the game and pay my bills. So I decided to get back into the game.*

*So you were afraid of losing stuff so you’re getting some stuff now.*

*Exactly.*

*Now was she working as well?*

*Yeah, she was working too. But she got laid-off from her job. Yeah we both got laid-off around the same time. We had just moved in our apartment probably like 5 or 6 months prior to that.*

*That’s a lot of pressure.*

*Yeah.*

Carl obtains day labor work when he can. “Last year I lived at the west motel. I was jumping between living in and out of motel rooms and my brother’s. Now I’ve been living, it’s



actually like a boarding house, like a house that they divided into rooms and they rent rooms out. There's like six other tenants that live there in this one house. I pay 150 a week." Carl's main priority securing a safe place to stay and have enough resources to eat, but he still goes on drug use binges when the funds are available but he is slowing down. "You know, getting high isn't my top priority anymore. My top priority is finding work every day. Just working somewhere."

Janet has an extensive record including several forgery charges. She finds it impossible to find employment, and although she gets a small stipend from disability, she has a hard time putting food on the table, "Jesus, I can't even get hired by Dollar Tree and they hire about anyone. I have to live with it. I guess some people who can afford it can get their records expunged but I can't. I could get a part time job still and keep my SSI, I would like to work. Right now everybody's hurting."

Others also find their records have significantly limited their job opportunities, even for the service sector. Loretta is facing the downside of middle age and can't find work anywhere, but she keeps applying. In the meantime, she resorts to prostitution but at her age, she says it makes her "sick to have to turn tricks just to eat," and she can't escape from her inner pain through drugs anymore, because she can longer afford them very often. She states, "I've already got 1-2 felonies, it's hard for some people with felonies to get out there and get a job, you gotta have clothes on your back yanno, you got kids and you wanna take care of your kids, I don't have no problem doing that, to give them a nice life. Getting a nice \$500 check every week, I'm willing to put in the work for that. Then they [a company to which she recently applied] told me I was on the call back list, and I keep going back there once a week to find out what's going on but they say they're still moving stuff and all that."

Getting a job with any criminal record is difficult enough, but getting a job with a record of financial fraud and forgery is particularly problematic. Many offenders, particularly female offenders had engaged in this type of crime for financial gain and found their record followed them from interview to interview. For example, getting a Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) certificate is one form of technical training available to offenders in prison. Janet completed the certification training to be a CAN while incarcerated, but because of her fraud convictions, a law prohibited her from working in the health care industry. Eventually, she started lying about her record, but that would only allow her to work temporarily, until the record check was complete. “In fact, I had some jobs that I started working and then they called me to personnel and said that they had to get rid of me because of my criminal history because I lied about it and they found out.”

Others perceived their vulnerability to relapse and drug use came with other episodic stress and/or depression. Joel was a heroin addict who had been clean for several years, but with the onset of a depressive episode, a family member brought him a bag of heroin and it was all over, “he just threw the bags of heroin on the bed and it was just like I never stopped.”

It is important to remember that substance use is escapist for some, while others enjoy the thrills and excitement that “living in the game” offers. For these reasons, some are simply not willing to give up the benefits of drug use. Allen perceives drugs give him the courage that he otherwise lacks, “I went in and out of jail damn near 22 years of my life. I was in the federal penitentiary. Because I wasn’t ready to stop cause if I was I could have. I liked that high and I liked how much heart it gave me. It give you heart and it give you courage. It makes you speak out and say stuff to people that you would never say.”

Pam lives with a functional alcoholic, is a parent to adult children, and has been in and out of prison, primarily for parole violations as she simply cannot beat her crack addiction. She has worked numerous jobs as a restaurant server, briefly worked as a cashier at stores like K-Mart, and now works for an elderly woman who cannot care for herself. She has decreased her use and offending a great deal and no longer goes out on the street to party and get high, but still uses daily just to keep herself “balanced.” “Every day I get high on top of that and if I didn’t have it I don’t know what I would do. I’m serious, I watch people who can’t even walk and talk while they’re smoking but I’m just like normal it gets me through the day...I can’t function without it, I really can’t, even with the medicine my psychiatrist got me on.”

Others in the persisting boat are not functioning as well. They have been on the street for a long time and the street appears to envelope their future, at least in the short term. “Basically I am like totally homeless now. Not that I haven’t been before but this is to a degree to whereas I am sleeping in abandoned houses, I’m sleeping in the park. It’s just like I’m sleeping on anybody’s couch,” admits Cameron. He says he doesn’t “run so hard” in the game any longer and when the cops come around, he doesn’t run at all. He is just not ready to give up the drugs yet. He explains, “It’s not like, I walk around here and act like I’m the dumbest person in the room, no. I know what to do and how to do it I just didn’t want to do the work. I knew it would require me to give some things up that I truly did not want to give up. I knew that once I did that I was going to have to revisit some stuff in order for me to have to get better..... I’m still a little stagnant but I’m coming around, it’s getting there.”

It is important to note that the addicts we interviewed who are still using in their 40s, 50s and beyond have created significant health consequences for themselves. Many report suffering from Hepatitis B, diabetes, and other serious conditions, while several shared that they were

HIV-positive. Finding employment and making a living wage would be a challenge if these health issues were their only handicap, but these coupled with a criminal record, and a life of addiction that has left some with many missing teeth, pronounced scarring, lacking formal education, without social networks for job contacts, and without a history of employment, makes the probability of success in today's economy close to zero. Others simply can't get work because they are too disabled and can't afford medical care.

Karen has been an addict all of her life until she got admitted to the methadone clinic and is now off the street. She can't work because she has liver failure, cirrhosis, hepatitis C, her kidneys are failing, and she is about ready to start kidney dialysis. Luckily, she has a partner that has a full-time job and can support her, even though she does not qualify for partnered or spousal medical benefits.

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Using a mixed method approach, the primary goal of this project was to increase our understanding about the underlying mechanisms and processes of desistance from crime and drug use among a contemporary sample of former offenders. It has provided one of the most extensive long-term follow-up periods, combining both official arrest statistics with in-depth interviews, using a mixed gender and race cohort of former offenders to date. The first phase of the research involved the estimation and analysis of offending trajectories. Semi-parametric trajectory models of arrest data for the original cohort sample of 1250 through 2008 revealed a five trajectory group model, with three groups differentially increasing their rate of offending and then leveling off to near zero levels (the desisters), and two groups that increased offending

at different rates but remained more criminally active throughout the time period compared to the former three groups (the persisters). These trajectories formed our sampling framework for Phase II. In Phase II in-depth interviews were conducted with 304 respondents selected from within the different offending trajectories in order to examine the processes and mechanisms that led to a particular trajectory. Qualitative analysis of interview data with 304 respondents provided support for the identity theory of desistance. Narratives from respondents revealed that the vast majority of offenders who had successfully desisted from both crime and drug use had transformed their “offender identity” into a “non-offender” identity. This cognitive process was typically motivated by realizing that if change did not occur, they would likely become what they feared, dying an addict or dying in prison. To conform to their new “non-offender” identity, respondents used various tools including changing their “people, places, and things” by seeking out noncriminal associates and staying away from previous locations that triggered their drug use or criminal behavior.

Although treatment may not have resulted in immediate desistance from substance use, the vast majority who eventually “got clean” did draw from the toolkit they had acquired in at least one treatment program. Religion also was used as a means through which many were able to establish pro-social support networks that reinforced their new identities. Contrary to some previous studies and theoretical views, partnership and parenthood did not appear to be “turning points” for the majority of our respondents. However, when they were ready to get clean, rekindling relationships with adult children or grandchildren was an extremely important factor

in their lives. Similarly, while getting a good job upon release did not deter the majority of addicts from relapse upon release from prison, it is clear that finding stable employment that provided a living wage is extremely difficult for this sample of drug involved offenders and that deciding to get clean and/or maintaining a “nonoffender” identity is more difficult when good employment is nonexistent.

The results of this research have advanced our understanding of the underlying mechanisms for change in a drug-involved sample of former offenders and has provided support for the identity theory of desistance (Paternoster and Bushway 2009). This theory asserts that before previous offenders find conventional opportunities like marriages, jobs, and conventional social networks, and make good on them once they are found, that their identity must first be changed so that they reject their previous life as an offender and seek to change. In contrast, the age-graded theory of informal social control asserts that changes in structure occur *before* there is any change in offender’s identities in the desistance process. In fact, in this theory, identity change may not even be necessary; the theory appears to contend that all that is necessary for change to occur is a change in one’s social role (ex: job or marriage) (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993 ). There is no disagreement between the theories that conventional social roles, like marriage, jobs, and pro-social friendship networks, are very important. However, results of this research support the contention that identity change comes before involvement in pro-social roles and institutions.

The assertion that identity change must precede a change to pro-social roles is also consistent with a great deal of research on assortative mating and job recruitment. Assortative mating is a non-random selection process in which those with similar attitudes, values, environments, cultural attributes, educational credentials and behaviors are attracted to those

similar to them (Mare 1991; Sprecher 1998). In particular, there is assortative mating with respect to behavior both conventional and unconventional. Krueger et al. (1998) found that while assortative mating with respect to anti-social personality attributes was low, there was substantial mutual attraction on the basis of self-reported behavior. Rhule-Louie and McMahon (2007) argued that people non-randomly select themselves into particular environments where they are most likely to find people like themselves. Consistent with other literature, they too found considerable assortative mating with respect to anti-social behavior and drug use (see also Caspi and Herbener 1990). This kind of assortative mating with respect to marriage partners would apply generally to social relationships and these relationships are where marriage partners are found and job opportunities made known (Granovetter 1995). Moreover, employers of less-educated workers want some signal of respectability (Holzer 1996). By and large offenders simply do not find themselves in overwhelmingly pro-social networks without the entrée provided by an initial identity change. To suggest that an anti-social individual could marry the “right” person or secure the “perfect” job and therein have the means or impetus to go straight, contradicts the data and is increasingly unlikely amidst a historical moment where marriageable partners are fewer and farther between, and the labor market continues to shrink. Moreover, the vast scope of collateral consequences attached to offender status exacerbates reintegration hurdles and further distances this population from pro-social partners and gainful, steady, legitimate employment. This contemporary dynamic places even greater import on the significance of identity change within the desistance process. Without identity change, ex-offenders will not likely find themselves in environments where they will come across conventional partners to marry, employment, or even pro-social peers; conventional opportunities do not arrive randomly.

Additional support for the identity theory of desistance from out data is the fact that even respondents who had successfully accessed good jobs and pro-social partners after release from prison relapsed and lost these opportunities if they were “not ready” to clean. Without substantial identity change, even those wanting to be ex-offenders and with the pro-social jobs and partners available will likely misplay the opportunities that they have. It is doubtful, the data suggest, that an offender who has not felt the dissatisfaction of the crystallization of discontent, and who has not decided that they are going to change who they are, will respond favorably to the social control efforts of a partner, and unlikely to be effective employees even if they should be hired. The best chance for desistance to take place is if offenders decide they want to turn their lives around, including who they are, and then take initial steps on their own to send signals that they have changed. These include successfully handling the small opportunities they may have (e.g. entry level jobs) to reveal their new identity until better opportunities (like conventional partners, and good jobs) are provided.

The desistance process, as articulated by the identity theory of desistance, is also consistent with the addiction “stage of change” literature. For example, Prochshaska and DiClemente’s (1983) schema of behavioral changes is based on six stages through which one wanting to change an unwanted behavior traverses. Notably, some of the components/principles of this change model are that: 1) change is intentional and anchored in a deliberate decision to change, 2) it begins with a re-evaluation of one’s current behavior, 3) moves to a deliberately made decision to change, 4) followed by a period of making initial steps to change one’s views and practicing the new behaviors, and *then* 5) searching for structural supports for the change. This view of self-change and others are outlined in the addiction desistance literature (see Biernacki 1986).



In addition to advancing the theoretical debate on desistance, the findings of this research also have clear implications for policy. First, a recurring theme throughout the interview narratives is that a critical component of the desistance process, and the process by which offenders persist in crime, is the identity change or “being ready” to change. Those who successfully desisted from drugs and crime frequently mentioned that they were ready to stop offending and, only then did they take advantage of available opportunities to change. Paternoster and Bushway (2009) have argued that several things must occur before an offender is ready to leave their life of crime behind. First, offenders must make connections between the hardships and harms they are experiencing in their lives with their current identity and the kind of person they want to become. Part of this process also involves connecting previously unrelated events so that the hardships and failures they have experienced in the past are projected into the future and perceived as likely to occur again. It is this new understanding that what were previously thought of as isolated and unique events are actually the logical consequences of their current identity and will not go away until that identity is changed and intentional self-improvement begun. This understanding that the difficult life is connected and is connected to one’s identity, one’s future, and one’s preferences has been referred to as the crystallization of discontent.

For the most part, offenders are typically left to their own devices to come to this point of realization. It is a painful discovery and one that does not come easily since in addition to their

other liabilities, many previous offenders we spoke to had a pronounced self-attribution bias whereby they took credit for their successes (“it’s due to my skill”) but often did not assume responsibility for their failures (“I was just unlucky”). One therapeutic intervention that may accelerate this self-discovery process is cognitive-behavioral therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, which has been shown to be one of the more effective prison-based therapy programs in terms of reducing recidivism (Lipsey, Landenberger, and Wilson, 2007), is premised upon providing clients with better cognitive skills including but not limited to the skills necessary to identify problems and the consideration of alternative courses of action to solve those problems, the evaluation of possible solutions before adopting a course of action, provision of critical reasoning and rational deliberation skills, the importance of long-term planning, and the importance of taking the position of other people within one’s social environment. Although the cognitive therapy model is not theoretically based on the identity theory of desistance, the practices of cognitive behavioral therapy appear to provide offenders with exactly those cognitive and rational skills that would enable them to more easily “put two and two together” and realize that the life of a criminal offender and drug abuser will likely result in them becoming their “feared self.” Such self-awareness would be instrumental in getting offenders ready to change, ready to adopt a new identity and begin the process of movement toward a non-offender identity.

Secondly, results of this research support the contention that drug addiction is a chronic lifetime disease characterized by relapses and behavior that appears undeterred by the threat of either formal or informal sanctions (Anglin, 2009). Many of the offenders in our sample who were still using drugs were primarily using marijuana, which still placed those under parole supervision at risk of a dirty urine and being sent back to prison. While many of the offenders in

the original cohort had engaged in property and violent crime when they were younger and, recent arrest data indicate that the majority of offenses in recent years were for probation/parole violations regardless of race and gender. Recent research suggests that targeting low-risk nonviolent offenders like this actually increases recidivism insofar as those individuals who arguably do the least harm and are situated on the more conventional end of the offending spectrum are now subject to the criminogenic effects of net-widening crime control (Pew Report, 2011). Our analyses supports this contention; parole was not only a failed deterrent for many respondents in our sample, but it was a direct impediment to successful reentry and long-term desistance. Although intensive probation with random urine tests is extremely popular, respondents expressed continued frustration with the costs and energy associated with probationary supervision. Many respondents articulated a great deal of frustration with the daily obligations connected with probation officer meetings including securing childcare, convenient and affordable public transportation, missing work, and even sleep for those working several jobs. Many expressed the desire for incrementally decreasing supervision or meetings that were more regularly scheduled to help abate the stresses of intensive supervision. Within our sample, many recreational drug users who held jobs, participated in their communities, and who at some point expressed pro-social long-term goals, saw their futures snatched from them once charged with the stigma and deleterious effect of an offender status. Many were forced to resort to the only networks and markets that would accommodate them.

The reality that many low-level drug users faced is, of course, related to our nation's war on drugs. McBride et al. (2009) contend that the history of drug policies can be characterized into 5 main approaches: prohibition, harm reduction, medicalization, legalization and regulation, and decriminalization. The Obama Administration's approach to America's drug problem

appears to be a significant departure from past administrations, with more emphasis on treatment and prevention. Unfortunately, there appears to be little effect of this philosophical transition in actual policies since the budget for domestic law enforcement was still projected to increase much more than that allocated for treatment (ONDCP, 2011). Moreover, in the past 5 years, the U.S. government was reported to have spent over \$3 billion to train local prosecutors and police along with other counter narcotics strategies to decrease the drug trade in Latin America. This does not include the billions spent by the military to help detect planes and boats carrying narcotics to the U.S. (Bennett, 20011). From an economic perspective, medicalizing drugs like marijuana can provide massive sales tax revenues as well as significant savings in criminal justice budgets (e.g. court costs, correctional supervision, and interdiction of substances). We would encourage continued change in the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) stance on drug control policies and hope that expenditures will one day mirror propaganda by placing more emphasis on harm reduction with more resources going to prevention and treatment in lieu of incarceration, and other programs that reduce the co-morbid health consequences of drug addiction.

Our research also supports previous work that has placed female criminality within a larger context of a violent childhood and cycle of violent relationships (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2013). Female offenders in our sample were almost 10 times more likely to have been sexually victimized as children compared to their male counterparts and many of these women continued to experience violence at the hands of intimate partners through adulthood. Many of these victims acknowledged the use of drugs and alcohol as a salve or escape from these traumas, which ultimately led to their addiction and incarceration. Because drug related crimes are the most common repeat offense for women (Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, and Rosenbaum, 2002),

helping females heal from primary traumas would seem to go a long way to reducing recidivism, net of drug treatment programs. As Harrison noted over ten years ago, “Drug abuse is often regarded as a symptom of underlying problems, and those underlying problems must be treated for the individual to stop abusing drugs.” (Harrison, 2001, p. 474). Programs that fail to consider the auxiliary trauma endured by many female offenders will inevitably fall short. We caution, however, that offenders even within race and gender groups, are not homogenous groups, and individual differences must be considered so treatment is tailored to individual needs.

Gender-sensitive programming is also related to our call for an expanded measure of interpersonal social support upon reentry. Many of our respondents’ family members had understandably given up on them and had little faith that they would ever truly “get clean.” Earlier in this report we explored the effects of crime, substance abuse, and incarceration on parenting but here it is important to reiterate that parenting may have little effect on the willingness to desist because meaningful relationships between offender and child may have never been forged. Narratives often illustrated that the anonymity and resentment that existed between respondents and their children was only exacerbated by repeated cycling in and out of prison sentences. Even visitation proved an apparently inadequate platform for building ties and reconciliation and for some, and interfered with the required code of conduct or stoicism that frequently comes with “doing time.”

Essentially reentry begins well before release and penal agendas shifting more towards rehabilitation than incapacitation must consider the need for inexpensive mediation and reconciliation forums for inmates and their family members (Maruna, 2001; Taxman et al., 2002). Restorative justice initiatives may prove remarkably useful to inmates whose family members were often directly victimized or at the very least seriously compromised by offenders’

choices and actions (Miller, 2011). Research has demonstrated that social support and social bonds are unequivocally critical to crime prevention. Additionally, however short that rope may be, the tie that binds an inmate and his or her only pro-social associations could mean the difference between desistance and recidivism, and merits closer attention and support.

In sum, we contend that rather than remain regarded as a matter of crime control, offender reentry must be recast as a critical public health issue. The costs of unsuccessful offender reentry, particularly for those with drug addictions, manifest in medical care expenses, the loss of future earning, public programming expenditures, homelessness, criminal justice resource disbursement, and decreases in collective quality of life measures. Recidivism is unequivocally linked to inequality and the ways in which society keeps individuals and groups in disadvantaged conditions. Once regarded as an unnecessarily costly public health problem, a new discourse that acknowledges the complexity of social inequality and the misplacement of penal approaches instead of an etiological orientation has emerged. Our research calls for the need for rehabilitation and multi-level community interventions, and a means through which patterns of risk can be identified and eradicated. The journey to (re)integration is indeed a long one, but need not be impossible.

## LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As with all research, this study is not without several limitations. Although we utilized a random selection method to obtain the sample for in-depth interviews, we cannot assume that the resulting sample was without selection bias. Because of sample mortality, transience, and some still under correctional supervision, it took three sample selection draws to fulfill the race and gender quotas within all five trajectories. A total 632 individuals from the original cohort of 1257

were contacted for interviews. Of these, 141 were deceased, 161 were still incarcerated, 42 were out of state, and 83 were unreachable by any means. Of those successfully contacted and not incarcerated, 304 agreed to be interviewed and only 5 declined. This sampling bias may threaten the study's internal validity. That is, it may be that the respondents we were able to locate and interview differ in some systematic way from those we could not locate. However, because our primary research goal was to understand the mechanisms of desistance, and over 50% of our interviewed sample was obtained from the “desisting” trajectories, we are fairly confident that our results are internally valid.

Sample generalizability is another matter. Phase I of this study was comprised of a cohort of 1250 drug-involved offenders originally released from prison in the early 1990s in a Mid-Atlantic state. Phase II was comprised of a sample of 304 members of this cohort who were not incarcerated, not deceased, still resided in the state, and agreed to be interviewed. The extent to which the findings based on this sample can be generalized to all drug-involved offenders is not known. However, we believe the large sample size that was representative of the five different trajectories of desistance ameliorate the compromises to sample generalizability.

Another limitation with the qualitative component of this research is “authenticity.” There are no set standards for evaluating the validity or authenticity of conclusions in qualitative research. It is not improbable that some respondents may have been untruthful, particularly about such things as their recent criminal involvement or substance use. One of the procedures the research team used to document authenticity of an interview was to write up “interview responses” immediately after each interview. In these responses, interviewers described their perceptions of the interview including the contextual understanding that was often manifest in nonverbal behavior, such as silences, emotional outbursts, humor, etc. These were important for

validating a small number of respondents who said they had not been using drugs, although their nonverbal behavior, such as continuous scratching and sniffing would indicate otherwise. Because of these interview responses, we know that these inconsistencies occurred in only a small fraction of the interviews, thereby increasing the authenticity of our findings.

The sampling design of this study included African American and white males and females. However, because sample sizes were too small, the qualitative sample did not include persons of Hispanic heritage or members of other ethnic groups. As such, we cannot assume the findings here are representative of other groups including Latinos, Asian Americans, American Indians, or others.

While certainly not definitive, our findings regarding the identity theory of desistance are promising. Our research, and that of Maruna (2001) and Giordano and colleagues (Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph, 2002), strongly suggests among drug-involved offenders who live during a period of economic contraction that the turning points identified by Sampson and Laub may not be either available or successful in leading offenders away from crime. There is a great deal of work left to be done, however. One of the most pressing issues is the causal ordering of identity and other cognitive variables and structural factors like marriages, jobs, and children. In our quantitative analyses we were not able to quantify offenders' identities, although the qualitative data indicated that identity change and a readiness for change was necessary before behavior change. Despite the fact that the qualitative findings suggest this, we were not able to statistically test whether identity change and its collateral effects on preferences and social networks precede entrance into conventional social roles, is triggered or initiated by these social roles, or if they are mutually related. This is an important consideration both for theoretical reasons in terms of distinguishing identity theories from more structural theories of desistance as



well as for public policy reasons. If former offenders are not receptive to things like new jobs and new social relationships because they are not ready to change or are unable to successfully import jobs and partners that come their way into their lives, then expending resources on employment training and the like will have little effect on their behavior. What is clear is that the belief that only jobs and marriages will lead offenders to desist is too simplistic. Additional research that is directly focused on offenders' growing sense of dissatisfaction with their lives, the cognitive and emotional changes undergone leading them to think that they need to be a different kind of person, and how these may link to new, conventional opportunities will go a long way toward a better understanding of why and how offenders desist from both substance abuse and crime. Relatedly, research is also needed to determine the efficacy of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) in accelerating the process of identity change. Moreover, while CBT is most often delivered in correctional settings, it is worthwhile to investigate the extent to which such therapy can be effectively delivered in community settings to fulfill the needs of re-entering offenders, particularly since longitudinal outcome studies find that those who participate in community-based drug abuse treatment commit fewer crimes than those who do not (Pendergrast, 2009).

## DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Papers

Martin, S. S., O'Connell, D. J., Paternoster, R., & Bachman, R. (2011). The long and winding road to desistance from crime for drug-involved offenders: The long-term influence of TC treatment on re-arrest. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 41(2), 179-196.

Ronet Bachman, Erin Kerrison, Daniel O'Connell, Raymond Paternoster, and Lionel Smith. *An Identity Theory of Desistance: Long-term Patterns of Relapse and Recidivism for a Cohort of Drug-Involved Offenders*. Submitted to the American Journal of Sociology.

### Conference Presentations

American Society of Criminology: Washington, DC, November 2011

Ronet Bachman, "Roads Diverge: Preliminary Findings from a Long-term Study of Drug-Involved Offenders."

Erin Kerrison: "What's Good For The Goose May Not be Good for the Gander: Reconciling Identity and Survival Amid the Reentry Effort."

Daniel O'Connell, Raymond Paternoster, and Steven Martin. "Finding the Right Road: Examining the Component Effects of Transitional Substance Abuse Treatment on Long Term Patterns of Offending."

American Society of Criminology: Chicago, November 2012

Ronet Bachman and Raymond Paternoster, "Testing the Identity Theory of Desistance: Findings from a Long-term Study of Drug-Involved Offenders."

Erin Kerrison, "Second-Chance Grandparenting: How an (Un)Conventional Role May Impact the Desistance Process."

Daniel O'Connell, "When Desistance Isn't Desistance: Low Level Offending and Self-Harm Reduction."

Lionel Smith, "The Impact of Changes in Illicit Drug Markets on Drug Use and Criminal Activity and Desistance."

Erin Kerrison, "Second-Chance Grandparenting: How an (Un)Conventional Role May Impact the Desistance Process."

Scheduled for the 2013 American Society of Criminology Meeting, Atlanta, November 2013

Erin Kerrison, Lionel Smith, and Ronet Bachman, "Parenthood and Desistance: A Mixed Methods Analysis."

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## APPENDIX A – INFORMED CONSENT FORM

## INFORMED CONSENT

### **ROADS DIVERGE: LONG-TERM PATTERNS OF RELAPSE, RECIDIVISM AND DESISTANCE FOR A RE-ENTRY COHORT (National Institute of Justice, 2008-IJ-CX-0017)**

**PURPOSE:** You are one of approximately 300 people being asked to participate in a research project conducted by the Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware and funded by the National Institute of Justice. You were part of the original study of offenders in Delaware leaving prison in the 1990s, and we want to find out how things in your life have changed since that time. The overall purpose of this research is to help us understand what factors lead to changes in criminal activity and drug use over time.

**PROCEDURES:** If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey, which will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. We will ask you to provide us with some contact information so that we can locate you again if we are able to do another follow up study in the future. You will be asked about your employment, family history, criminal involvement, health history, drug use, and how these have changed over time. We will use this information, as well as information that you have previously provided or which is publicly available. We will not ask you for the names of anyone, or the specific dates or specific places of any of your activities. The interviews will be tape-recorded, but you will not be identified by name on the tape. The tapes will be stored in a locked cabinet until they can be transcribed to an electronic word processor. After the tapes have been transcribed and checked for accuracy they will be destroyed. Anonymous transcribed data will be kept indefinitely – no audio data will be kept.

**RISKS:** There are some risks to participating in this study. You may experience distress or discomfort when asked questions about your drug use, criminal history, and other experiences. Should this occur, you may choose not to answer such questions. If emotional distress occurs, our staff will make referrals to services you may need, including counseling, and drug abuse treatment and support services.

The risk that confidentiality could be broken is a concern, but it is very unlikely to occur. You will not be identified on the audiotape of the interview. We request that you not mention names of other people or places, but if this happens, those names will be deleted from the audiotape prior to transcription. All study materials are kept in locked file cabinets. Only three members of research team will have access to study materials.

**BENEFITS:** You will have the opportunity to participate in an important research project, which may lead to the better understanding of what factors both help and prevent an individual's recovery from drug use and criminal activity.

**COMPENSATION:** You will receive \$100 in cash to compensate you for your time and travel costs for this interview.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Your records will be kept confidential. They will be kept under lock and key and will not be shared with anyone without your written permission. Your name will not appear on any data file or research report.

The Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware has submitted a Privacy Certificate to the National Institute of Justice and it has been approved. This will protect data from being

revealed to non-research interests by court subpoena in any federal, state, or local civil, criminal, administrative, legislative or other proceedings.

You should understand that a Privacy Certificate does not prevent you or a member of your family from voluntarily releasing information about yourself or your involvement in this research. If you give anyone written consent to receive research information, then we may not use the Certificate to withhold that information.

The Privacy Certificate does not prevent research staff from voluntary disclosures to authorities that you intend to immediately harm yourself or others. . These incidents would be reported as required by state and federal law

Because this research is paid for by the National Institute of Justice, staff of this research office may review copies of your records, but they also are required to keep that information confidential.

**RIGHT TO QUIT THE STUDY:** Participation in this research project is voluntary and you have the right to leave the study at any time. The researchers and their assistants have the right to remove you from this study if needed.

You may ask and will receive answers to any questions concerning this study. If you have any questions about this study, you may contact Ronet Bachman or Daniel O'Connell at (302) 831-6107. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant you may contact the Chairperson of the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Review Board at (302) 831-2136.

#### **CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED**

I have read and understand this form (or it has been read to me), and I agree to participate in the in-depth interview portion of this research project.

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PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	DATE
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SIGNATURE OF WITNESS/INTERVIEWER	DATE
----------------------------------	------

#### **CONSENT TO BE CONTACTED IN FUTRE**

I have read and understand this form (or it has been read to me), and I agree to be recontacted in the future as part of this research project.

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PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE	DATE
-----------------------	------

---

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS/INTERVIEWER	DATE
----------------------------------	------

Ronet Bachman, Ph.D.  
Principal Investigator  
University of Delaware  
Telephone: (302) 831-6107

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This Consent Form is approved by the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB)  
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## APPENDIX B – LIFE EVENTS CALENDAR





**NOTE: THE CALENDAR WAS PRINTED ON 11x14 PAPER – IT DOES NOT FIT WELL ON 8x11**

**Roads Diverge**

**National Institute of Justice, Grant #2008-IJ-CX-0017  
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice and  
The Center for Drug and Alcohol Studies  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716**

**August 2009**

**LIFE CALENDAR**

First, I want to thank you for agreeing to talk to me today. I will warn you right up front that this is going to take awhile, so if you need to get up or get a get a drink, please feel free. I cannot stress to you how important this research is. As you know, the original study was used to determine how drug treatment works and for whom. You were a big part of that research and that study helped a lot of people, so I again say thanks. This time, we want to try to understand better what happens to people across long periods of time. Basically we want your story, starting with when you first enrolled in the study. What we really want to understand is what things changed and what things remained the same, and what you thought and felt at the time. By doing this with a lot of people, we hope to be able to understand the long term effects of encountering the criminal justice system directly from those who have experienced it, such as yourself. Because we will talk a lot about how you felt about things, I am going to record out talk. We are doing this with everyone. After we have made a transcript of the interview, we will destroy the tape. Your identity will not be able to be linked with the transcript.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

First, we are going to talk about some of your experiences year-by-year since we last talked to you in \_\_\_\_\_. We are going to start with the first year after your release in \_\_\_\_\_ and move forward through today, but please feel free to go back if you recall something we missed along the way. In addition to the major holidays in each year, I want to note your birthday and other special occasions like anniversaries to help you think about the year. We have filled in as much as we could from the previous interviews. We have also filled in any criminal justice related information from the data we received from the Statistical Analysis Center. We will want to verify all of this with you. Remember that what we really want is your story, so we are most interested in how all of these things fit together.

OK, first we want to talk about where you were living. (INTERVIEWER: refer to the prefilled information below on where the person lived when they first got out of prison. Verify this with them and begin probes.)

**STEP #1: ESTABLISH TIME SEQUENCE**

**FOR EACH YEAR      ☐      DRAW HORIZONTAL LINE TO SHOW START/END OF EACH EVENT/CIRCUMSTANCE;  
   ☐      X OUT THE TWO NOT-APPLICABLE EVENTS/CIRCUMSTANCE**

<b>INSERT BIRTHDAY/HOLIDAYS/KNOWN CRIMINAL JUSTICE EVENTS</b>												
<b>XYEAR</b>												
<i>First, where were you living in XYEAR?</i>	Januar y	Februar y	Marc h	Apri l	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Augus t	Septembe r	Octobe r	Novembe r	Decembe r
<b>A. RESIDENCE</b>												
A1. Did you live in Delaware? If no, where did you live? _____												
Specifically, where did you live in XYEAR? A2. Lived Alone a. rented b. owned												
A3. Lived With Partner/Spouse a. rented b. owned												
A4. Lived with Own Children a. rented b. owned												
A5. Lived with Partner/Spouse and Children a. rented b. owned												
A6. Lived with other family members												
A7. Lived with friends												
A8. Was in correctional setting e.g. prison, work release												
A9. Was homeless												
A10. Other												

<b>XYEAR EMPLOYMENT</b>												
<i>Next we would like to know about the jobs you had that year. (INTERVIEWER: refer to the prefilled information below. Verify this with them and begin probes.)</i>	Januar y	Februar y	Marc h	Apri l	Ma y	Jun e	Jul y	Augu st	Septemb er	Octob er	Novemb er	Decemb er
B1. Full time												

B2. Part time												
B3. Job Training												
B4. In school												
B5. Quit job												
B6. Was fired												
<b>For Each Job</b>												
B1a. Describe your job. What exactly did you do? B1b. Did it come with Health Benefits? B1c. How did you find that job? Who helped you? B1d. Did you like the job? B1e. If job lost, what happened to the job?												
<b>B9. Unemployed</b>												
B9a. Did you do anything to try and find work? B9b. Go on job interviews?												
B9c. What were some of things that prevented you finding a job? What would typically happen when you went for an interview? Bd. Did your record prevent you from getting jobs? Talk to me about this. How do you know it was because of your record?												
<b>B10. EDUCATIONAL TRAINING</b>												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B10a. Did you get any educational training during the year? Yes _____ No _____</li> <li>If yes, what kind? _____</li> <li>What time period? _____</li> </ul>												
B10b. Would you have liked to get more educational												

or vocational training if it were available? What prevented you from getting it?												
<b>XYEAR C. RELATIONSHIPS</b>												
<i>Could you tell me about your marital status or other romantic partners? Were married or living with a sexual partner in XYEAR? Did this relationship last the entire year?</i>	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
C1. Single - never married												
C2. Married												
C3. Living with sexual partner												
C3. Widowed												
C4. Divorced/Separated/Split up												
C5. Other Specify:												
<b>For each relationship</b>												
Ca. What kind of relationship did you have with your partner? Tell me about it?												

<b>D. CHILDREN XYEAR: Next we want to talk about your children.</b>	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
D1. <i>I know that you had _____ children when you were released. What are their ages now?</i> Daughter age _____ Son age _____ Daughter age _____ Son age _____ Daughter age _____ Son age _____ Daughter age _____ Son age _____	(Interviewer: . Record here whether children are to different partners and if so, which child it with which partner).											

<p> Son age _____  Daughter age _____  Son age _____ Daughter age _____  Son age _____ </p>	
D2. <i>Have you had any other children since your release in _____?</i>	IF YES. What year were they born? INTERVIEWER: Make note of this so you can bring it back up in the appropriate year.)
D2a. <i>If so, what are their ages now?</i> Daughter age _____ Son age _____ Daughter age _____ Son age _____ Daughter age _____ Son age _____	
D3. <i>Do you have any grandchildren?</i> A. no B. yes, ages _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____	
<p> <b><i>Open-Ended Questions for Each Child/Grandchild:</i></b>  <b><i>Thinking back to that time,</i></b>  _____  Let's talk about your contact with them while you were incarcerated?  -- Did you see or contact some more than others? If so, who and why?  How many times did you talk to them in an average month?  _____  How many times did you see them in an average month?  _____  Would you have liked to have </p>	

seen them more?	
What was your contact like with them when you were first released that time in _____ ?	
Tell me about your overall relationship with your children in XYEAR	
What were your children doing then?	
How were they provided for financially during XYEAR?	
What kind of relationship would you have liked to have with your children then?	
What kind of relationship would you have liked to have with your grandchildren then?	
Were any of your children arrested in XYEAR?	
Were any of your children serving time in prison or on probation in XYEAR?	

<b>I. SPIRITUALITY/RELIGION</b>													
<b>Next we want to talk to you about your spirituality or religious beliefs and practices.</b>													
What religion were you brought up in? _____													
What do you consider yourself to be now? _____													
Did your religion or spirituality change during the time you were incarcerated that time Yes no. HOW? <i>When you got out that time in XYEAR What role did religion or spirituality play, and can you talk about how it may have changed?</i>													
<b>F. DRUG USE</b>													
<i>Next, we would like you to think back to this year and try to</i>	Janua	Febr	Mar	Ap	M	Ju	Ju	Aug	Septe	Octo	Nove	Dece	

	ry	uary	ch	ril	ay	ne	ly	ust	mber	ber	mber	mber
<p><i>remember your drug and alcohol use</i></p> <p><i>When you first got out of prison in _____. What we mostly want to know is what role drugs played in your life, and whether there were times when you used more drugs during the year and how you used them. That is, was it all the time, on weekends, etc. Was there a time in the year where you used more heavily? We also want to know who you mostly used with- not names of course, but was it friends, family or your partner and so on. Remember, what we are really after here is your story, so for this part, we want to know what role drugs played in your story for the year when you first got out in. To keep it organized, I'd like to ask some questions, but these are mostly to guide us. Let's go one drug at a time, and then look at the overall picture.</i></p>												
<p>F1 ALCOHOL: Can you tell me about the role alcohol played in your life in XYEAR.</p> <p>If person reports no alcohol use, move to F2. _____ No Use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your patterns of drinking then?</li> <li>- a. using daily   b. using several times a week   c. using once a week   d. using once a month or less</li> <li>- Would you describe your drinking then as a problem? (why/why not).</li> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to drink with?</li> <li>- Tell me about the times during the year when you drank more, or less than at other times.</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you drank more or less.</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p><i>How about other drugs? Were you using:</i></p> <p>F1 Marijuana: talk to me about the role that Marijuana played in your life in XYEAR.</p> <p>If person reports no Marijuana use, move to F2. _____ No Use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your patterns of smoking then?</li> <li>- a. using daily   b. using several times a week   c. using once a week   d. using once a month or less</li> <li>- Would you describe your smoking pot then as a problem? (why/why not).</li> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to smoke with?</li> </ul>												

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tell me about times during the year when you smoked more, or less than at other times.</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you smoked more or less?</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p>F1 Cocaine: talk to me about the role that Cocaine played in your life in XYEAR.</p> <p>If person reports no Cocaine use, move to F2. _____ No Use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your patterns of cocaine use then? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. using daily b. using several times a week c. using once a week d. using once a month or less</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Did you use a. powder b. crack c. inject (why?)</li> <li>- Would you describe your cocaine use then as a problem? (why/why not).</li> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to use with?</li> <li>- Tell me about the times during the year when you used more, or less than at other times.</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you used more or less?</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p>F1 Opiates: talk to me about the role that Opiates played in your life in XYEAR.</p> <p>If person reports no Opiate use, move to F2. _____ No Use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your patterns of Opiates use then? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. using daily b. using several times a week c. using once a week d. using once a month or less</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Did you use a. heroin b. prescription opiates c. inject (why?)</li> <li>- Would you describe your opiates use then as a problem? (why/why not).</li> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to use with?</li> <li>- Tell me about the times during the year when you used more, or less than at other times.</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you used more or less?</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p>F1 OTHER DRUGS talk to me about the role that other types of drugs played in your life in XYEAR.</p> <p>Probe: What other drugs were you mostly likely to use that year</p>												



<p>If person reports no drug use, move to F2. _____ No Use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would you describe your patterns of MOST USED OTHER DRUG use then? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. using daily b. using several times a week c. using once a week d. using once a month or less</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Why were you using that particular drug?</li> <li>- Would you describe your _____ use then as a problem? (why/why not).</li> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to use with?</li> <li>- Were there times during the year when you used more, or less than at other times?</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you used more or less?</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p>F10. If using drugs, did you inject any of these drugs with a needle?</p> <p>a. yes b. no</p> <p>Talk to me about that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Who were you mostly likely to use with?</li> <li>- Tell me about the times during the year when you used more, or less than at other times?</li> <li>- Talk to me about those changes? Why do you think you used more or less?</li> </ul> <p>(INTERVIEWER- if possible, record changes in use on calendar).</p>												
<p><b>OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR THOSE USING</b></p>												
<p>Let's talk about your overall use. How much would you say you enjoyed using during this time?</p> <p>a. A great deal b. Some c. Not much d. I didn't enjoy it at all</p> <p>Why do you think that is?</p> <p>(IF PARTNERED)</p> <p>What was your partner's role in your drug use?</p> <p>Tell me about how your partner felt about your use?</p> <p>How did drug use (both of yours) affect the relationship?</p> <p>(IF PARENT) How did your children feel about it?</p> <p>How did it effect those relationships</p> <p>Was it different for different children?</p> <p>How did drug use impact the rest of your family?</p> <p>How did drug use impact the rest of your job?</p> <p>Did you want to stop using?</p>												

Did your family try to help you quit in any way this year? Did your friends try to help you quit in any way this year? What other factors prevented you from quitting?												
<b>OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO QUIT USING DRUGS/ALCOHOL IN XYEAR.</b> When did you quit? Why? <i><b>Tell me more. (INTEVIEWER use silence here. Let them think and speak)</b></i> What steps did you take to stop using? What was the toughest part of stopping? Who or what helped you the most? How did they help you? What do you think was the most important reason you were able to stay clean? How long did you stay clean that time? If Person went back to use: What happened? Why? <i><b>Tell me more. (INTEVIEWER use silence here. Let them think and speak)</b></i>												

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>H. DRUG TREATMENT.</b> As part of the original study, you were enrolled in _____. Once you got out of _____, did you seek or get any other type of drug treatment that year? If yes, what was the program's name? _____												
H1a. If yes, was it mandated by the court? Yes _____ No _____ If no, talk to me about why you went? H1b. Did this involve any inpatient or residential treatment? a. yes, about _____ nights b. no When?												

(Use Calendar) H1c. How often did you go to the program? a. Everyday b. 2-3 times a week c. Once a week d. 1-2 times a month e. Only a few times ever H2. Did you successfully complete the program? If yes, what do you think helped you complete the program? If not, why didn't you complete the program? What factors prevented you from completing the program?												
How about other events – were you hospitalized or did you Go to the emergency room at any time in XYEAR?												
E6. Hospitalizations For												
E7. Emergency Room Visits For												
E8. Did you get help for emotional or psychological problems Like depression in XYEAR? If so, did it involve an overnight stay In a hospital or treatment facility?												
<b>. CRIMINAL JUSTICE/INSTITUTIONAL EVENTS XYEAR</b> Next we want to talk about your involvement in the criminal justice system and any criminal involvement you might have had. Remember that this is completely confidential. We have a number of years recorded from our earlier interviews, so let me go over what we have from that interview and maybe you can tell me whether it's the way you remember it or not. Then we want to talk about what you were feeling at that time.												
We have information from Delaware Showing that you WERE/ WERE NOT arrested in XYEAR. Describe arrest and incarceration data below. Did you have events that may have occurred in other states?	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
E1. Arrested												
E2. Incarcerated												
E3. On probation/parole												
E4. Work Release												
E5. Other												

<p><b>For each arrest/incarceration on timeline.</b></p> <p>Does that sound right? (IF NOT PROBE FOR INCIDENT).</p> <p>If yes: What happened?</p> <p>I'd like you to try to remember what you thought AT THE TIME.</p> <p>How did you feel about what you were doing at the time?</p> <p>What do you remember thinking about whose fault it was at the time?</p> <p>How did it impact your relationship with your family?</p> <p>Spouse?</p> <p>Children?</p> <p>Other family members?</p> <p>What about your employment (if they had any?)</p> <p>What role did drugs play in this incident?</p>	
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G. OTHER ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES	Janu ary	Febr uary	Ma rch	Ap ril	M ay	Ju ne	Ju ly	Aug ust	Septe mber	Octo ber	Nove mber	Dece mber
<p><b>G2. (IF ENGAGING IN CRIME)</b></p> <p>Remembering that what we are after here is your story, and having just gone through your relationships, employment, drug use and all of those other things in your life, what was your <b>pattern</b> of crime like during that year?</p> <p>Talk to me about the times you were more involved or less involved in criminal activity.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>											

<p>Why do you think your involvement in crime went up and/or down?          What were you thinking about the consequences of engaging in crime then?          Tell me about how you thought it would affect your future? (If they respond that they did not think about the future, ask why not).          Tell me about how you felt about the consequences for your family?          Consequences for your friends? Your job?</p> <p><b>(IF NOT ENGAGNG IN ILLEGAL BEHAVIOR)</b>          We know that people try to get out of crime from time to time. It looks like you were less involved in criminal activity in XYEAR than at other times in your life.          Talk to me about that please.          How did you avoid engaging in illegal activities?          What steps did you take to stay out of trouble?          What was the toughest part of staying out of trouble?          Who helped you the most?          If you had to list the three most important things that helped you stay out of trouble that year, what would they be?</p>	
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	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
<b>J. REFLECTIONS</b>												
J5. Please consider the important decisions (good or bad) you made during this year. What was the first important decision you made after getting released from prison? How did the decision turn out? Why do you think it turned out this way?												
J6. What was another important decision you made this year? How did the decision turn out? Why do												

you think it turned out this way?												
J7. What happened that was beyond your control that impacted your life during this time? PROBE: Did anyone close to you die or have a health scare of some kind? Talk to me about how that affected your life?												

*Is there anything else I should know about your life in XYEAR?*

## APPENDIX C – NVIVO TREE NODES USED FOR ANALYSES

Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	References		
Tree Node	AGENCY OR CONTROL		9	13		
	Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	Referenc es	
	Tree Node	Absence of control or agency		59	92	
	Tree Node	Financial		44	57	
	Tree Node	No more nonsense		56	75	
	Tree Node	on acquiring agency or control		186	392	
	Tree Node	Readiness		88	117	
Tree Node	ALCOHOL		6	8		
	Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	Referenc es	
	Tree Node	Common Exposure		73	108	
	Tree Node	Drinking Patterns		101	207	
	Tree Node	Onset		218	242	
	Tree Node	Peers		141	181	
	Tree Node	Periods of Abstinence		28	42	
	Tree Node	Relapse		31	45	
	Tree Node	Thoughts about Addiction		23	38	
		Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	References
		Tree Node	Casual and Controlled		34	54
		Tree Node	Escape		25	38
		Tree Node	Out of Control		9	10
		Tree Node	Thrill		3	4
		Tree Node	Thrill or Fun		9	15
Tree Node	BLAME FOR		23	25		



DRUGS AND OR CRIME					
	Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	Referenc es
	Tree Node	Anger or Frustration		31	36
	Tree Node	Boredom or Curiosity		30	40
	Tree Node	Depression		41	67
	Tree Node	Father or Stepfather		18	25
	Tree Node	Friends		43	53
	Tree Node	Illness or Disability		13	16
	Tree Node	Mother or Stepmother		14	18
	Tree Node	Partner or Girl-Boyfriend		20	25
	Tree Node	Poverty or Disadvantage		17	30
	Tree Node	Self		44	63
	Tree Node	Stigma or Exclusion		17	20
	Tree Node	Stress		44	76
	Tree Node	Un(der)emplo yment		19	32
Tree Node	CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE S		63	93	
	Type	Name	Memo Link	Sources	Referenc es
	Tree Node	Alcohol		78	103
	Tree Node	Criminal Family Members		153	220
	Tree Node	Divorce or Separation		98	119
	Tree Node	Drugs		81	119
	Tree Node	felt Love and or belonging		77	103

Tree Node	Tree Node	Grandparents	67	110	
	Tree Node	isolation	63	94	
		loneliness			
		lack of love			
	Tree Node	Married	75	76	
		parents			
	Tree Node	Poverty or	46	62	
		Disadvantage			
	Tree Node	Runaway	22	29	
	CRIME	17	24		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Change Over	65	81	
		Time			
	Tree Node	Common	47	65	
		Exposure			
	Tree Node	Consequence	86	131	
		s			
Tree Node	Tree Node	Financial	186	354	
		Gain			
	Tree Node	Onset	200	251	
	Tree Node	Peers	136	212	
	Tree Node	Thoughts	109	184	
		about Risks			
	Tree Node	Type	48	57	
		engaged in			
		<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>
	Tree Node	Dealing or		178	413
		Possession			
	Tree Node	DUI		44	68
Tree Node	Tree Node	Property		205	445
	Tree Node	Prostitution		45	69
	Tree Node	Violent		136	256
		26	50		
	DESISTANCE	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	<b>Type</b>				
	Tree Node	Agency &	180	328	
		Readiness			
	Tree Node	Aging Out	65	91	
	Tree Node	Attitude or	202	440	

	Outlook				
	Change				
Tree Node	Employment	69	97		
Tree Node	Fear	52	61		
Tree Node	Incarceration	68	91		
Tree Node	Relationships	20	30		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
Tree Node	Children			73	119
Tree Node	Friends			33	37
Tree Node	Grandchildren			22	31
Tree Node	Parents			45	60
Tree Node	Partner			85	159
Tree Node	Responsibility		12	17	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
Tree Node	for Self			105	165
Tree Node	to Children			92	146
Tree Node	to			3	3
	Grandparents				
Tree Node	to own Parents			25	37
Tree Node	Risk	97		140	
Tree Node	Shame	27		35	
Tree Node	Spirituality	106		184	
Tree Node	Treatment	110		175	
Tree Node	DISCONTENT	58	86		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
Tree Node	Anger or		94	157	
	Frustration				
Tree Node	Anti-Authority		19	26	
Tree Node	Betrayal		76	125	
Tree Node	Bravado or		21	34	
	Threat to				
	Respect				
Tree Node	Failure	49		83	
Tree Node	Fear	41		56	
Tree Node	Hopelessness	40		58	
Tree Node	Loneliness	44		66	
Tree Node	Mistrust	28		35	
Tree Node	Poor Health	44		70	
Tree Node	Regret	75		132	

	Tree Node	Secrecy		49	86	
	Tree Node	sick of being sick and tired		80	99	
	Tree Node	Trauma or Loss		128	234	
Tree Node	DRUGS		15	28		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>	
	Tree Node	Common Exposure		94	173	
	Tree Node	Drug of Choice		39	67	
		<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
		Tree Node	Alcohol		59	70
		Tree Node	Cocaine		106	157
		Tree Node	Crack		99	158
		Tree Node	Heroin		76	170
		Tree Node	Marijuana		89	159
		Tree Node	Pills & Others		53	81
	Tree Node	Onset		278	397	
	Tree Node	Overdose		8	8	
	Tree Node	Patterns of Use or Abuse		160	347	
	Tree Node	Peers		228	429	
	Tree Node	Periods of Abstinence		133	216	
	Tree Node	Prescription Drugs		70	120	
	Tree Node	Relapse		170	346	
	Tree Node	Thoughts About Addiction		120	231	
		<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
		Tree Node	Casual or Controlled		84	125
		Tree Node	Escape		72	116
		Tree Node	Out of Control		70	97
		Tree Node	Thrill or Fun		76	111
Tree Node	EDUCATION		23	26		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc</b>	

					<b>es</b>
	Tree Node	Adult		78	98
	Tree Node	Child-- Negative		66	75
	Tree Node	Child-Positive		53	64
	Tree Node	In prison		46	54
	Tree Node	Incomplete or Drop-Out		19	23
	Tree Node	No Access to		11	11
Tree Node	EMPLOYMEN T		47	57	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Lack of		117	187
	Tree Node	Negative Influences		30	35
	Tree Node	Positive Influences		110	147
	Tree Node	upon release		186	254
	Tree Node	While Offending		47	59
	Tree Node	While Using		123	202
Tree Node	FATHER		36	39	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Absent		93	115
	Tree Node	Abuse of Others		58	80
	Tree Node	Abuse of Subject		43	72
	Tree Node	Alcohol		76	100
	Tree Node	Bad Relationship		65	94
	Tree Node	Crime and Incarceration		52	64
	Tree Node	Discipline		42	50
	Tree Node	Drugs		45	58
	Tree Node	Good Relationship		112	152
	Tree Node	No Relation		41	49

	Tree Node	Present		34	38
	Tree Node	Single		1	1
	Tree Node	Step-father or Mom's Boyfriend		73	107
	Tree Node	Supportive		35	42
	Tree Node	Unsupportive		29	38
	Tree Node	Victim of Abuse		1	1
Tree Node	INTERVIEW FEEDBACK		2	2	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Anxiety and Hesitation		4	4
	Tree Node	Gratitude and Relief		38	42
Tree Node	MOTHER		41	48	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Absent		35	47
	Tree Node	Abuse of Others		13	14
	Tree Node	Abuse of subject		36	50
	Tree Node	Alcohol		40	63
	Tree Node	Bad Relationship		46	73
	Tree Node	Crime and Incarceration		24	41
	Tree Node	Discipline		66	79
	Tree Node	Drugs		36	59
	Tree Node	Good Relationship		195	310
	Tree Node	No Relation		4	5
	Tree Node	Present		35	43
	Tree Node	Single		48	59
	Tree Node	Step-mother or Dad's Girlfriend		19	23

	Tree Node	Supportive		114	185
	Tree Node	Unsupportive		30	40
	Tree Node	Victim of Abuse		54	72
Tree Node	NEIGHBORHOOD		6	6	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Community - Adult		12	12
	Tree Node	Community - Childhood		160	183
	Tree Node	Crime - Adult		18	24
	Tree Node	Crime - Childhood		44	62
	Tree Node	Drugs - Adult		20	29
	Tree Node	Drugs - Childhood		67	81
	Tree Node	Poverty - Adult		3	4
	Tree Node	Poverty - Childhood		43	47
	Tree Node	Violence - Adult		9	11
	Tree Node	Violence - Childhood		32	42
Tree Node	OWN PARENTING		83	104	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Absent		74	119
	Tree Node	children's effects on offender's crime & drug use		177	451
	Tree Node	Ex- or Detached Partner Help		41	51
	Tree Node	Family		56	100

	Tree Node	Support Grandparenting		38	45	
	Tree Node	is Married or Partnered		45	68	
	Tree Node	Single		27	31	
	Tree Node	Teenage		41	45	
	Tree Node	Thoughts About		59	75	
		<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node		Fear		16	20
	Tree Node		Joy		44	58
	Tree Node		Regret		82	118
	Tree Node		Responsibility		85	155
Tree Node	PRISON		20	22		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>	
	Tree Node	Common or Habitual Offender		81	146	
	Tree Node	Doing Time		117	169	
	Tree Node	First Arrest		184	203	
	Tree Node	First Incarceration		197	236	
	Tree Node	Impact on Employment		60	76	
	Tree Node	Impact on Reality		103	155	
	Tree Node	Impact on Relationships		76	116	
	Tree Node	Impact on Substance Abuse		95	139	
	Tree Node	Release		44	52	
	Tree Node	Thoughts about		38	56	
Tree Node	RECENT INVOLVEMENT		10	10		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>	



					<b>es</b>
	Tree Node	Alcohol		67	77
	Tree Node	Crime		14	17
	Tree Node	Drugs		96	136
	Tree Node	None		78	95
Tree Node	REENTRY		20	23	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Children		25	27
	Tree Node	Employment		188	277
	Tree Node	Family of Origin		82	114
	Tree Node	Fear		9	14
	Tree Node	Friends		19	24
	Tree Node	Grandparents		8	10
	Tree Node	Hope		22	25
	Tree Node	Housing		166	241
	Tree Node	Parents		71	94
	Tree Node	Probation and Parole		153	275
	Tree Node	Spouse or Partner		83	99
Tree Node	RELATIONSHI PS		36	45	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Children		99	166
	Tree Node	Friends		48	61
	Tree Node	Girl- BoyFriend		160	298
	Tree Node	Grandchildren		15	18
	Tree Node	Grandparents		44	57
	Tree Node	Marriage		105	200
	Tree Node	Siblings		138	187
Tree Node	SPIRITUALITY		12	14	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Adult		206	340
	Tree Node	Agnostic or Atheism		19	21

Tree Node	Tree Node	Child		176	194
	STIGMA		3	3	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Offender or User - other family members		5	5
	Tree Node	Offender or User - Self		53	67
	Tree Node	Race - Adult		10	11
	Tree Node	Race - Child		14	19
	Tree Node	Sexuality - Adult		2	2
Tree Node	Tree Node	Sexuality - Child		4	4
	TREATMENT		115	167	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	AA-NA		117	161
	Tree Node	Denial or Rejection		78	102
	Tree Node	Key-Crest		180	320
	Tree Node	Mental health		48	71
	Tree Node	Unavailability		10	13
Tree Node	TURNING POINTS		17	22	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Referenc es</b>
	Tree Node	Arrest		18	24
	Tree Node	Education or Graduation		4	5
	Tree Node	Employment		24	26
	Tree Node	Familial (Re)Inclusion or Reunion		22	39
	Tree Node	Familial Disownment or Dissolution		23	31
	Tree Node	Graduation		1	1

Tree Node	Homelessness or Runaway		18	27	
Tree Node	Incarceration		73	101	
Tree Node	Marriage		14	21	
Tree Node	Military		3	3	
Tree Node	Neighborhood		22	27	
Tree Node	OD'ing		4	4	
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
	Tree Node	Rock Bottom		9	9
Tree Node	Partners or Girl-Boyfriend		33	42	
Tree Node	Peer Group Change		53	81	
Tree Node	Pregnancy or Parenthood		35	54	
Tree Node	Relapse		7	9	
Tree Node	Rock Bottom		20	27	
Tree Node	Shame		10	12	
Tree Node	Spirituality		22	25	
Tree Node	Trauma or Loss		83	136	
Tree Node	Treatment		62	86	
Tree Node	Victimization		9	9	
Tree Node	VICTIMIZATION	2	2		
	<b>Type</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Memo Link</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>References</b>
Tree Node	Inflicted - Adult		39	56	
Tree Node	Inflicted - childhood		20	28	
Tree Node	rape or sexual assault		60	98	
Tree Node	Suffered - Adult		53	70	
Tree Node	Suffered - Childhood		140	235	