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The Arts, Rehabilitation or Both? Experiences of Mentoring Artists in Prison and Beyond.

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Abstract

Mentoring within the criminal justice system plays an important role in rehabilitative and desistance processes. The experiences of arts-based mentors are scarcely documented. This study discloses the narratives of eleven trained arts mentors who support ex-offenders in continuing their artistic engagement. Findings show a number of benefits and challenges for those who mentor ex-offenders, and their experiences convey a message to new recruits. Reasons for becoming a mentor, limitations and constraints and mentee focused factors are discussed.

Key Words – Arts, Artists, Criminal Justice, Ex-Offenders, Mentors, Rehabilitation

Pre-Review Only

Introduction

For several years the English and Welsh context have had considerable cuts to public services budgets as part of government austerity measures. Prisons and probation, in particular, taking a hard hit. Often the voluntary and charitable sector steps in to fill the void (see Busby 2019, Hughes, 2019, Ministry of Justice, 2014 and Wyld *et al.*, 2019). Mentoring within the criminal justice system (CJS) is a topic of current debate, “due to the focus on replacing short prison sentences with community sentences, and developing new strategies to work with offenders” (Kavanagh and Borrill, 2013: 401).

The impact of art based therapeutic programmes on prisoners and those on probation is documented, yet our understanding of mentoring is underdeveloped (see Bozeman and Feeney, 2007, Buck, 2018, Singh *et al.*, 2018) We felt it appropriate to explore the other half of the mentor-mentee relationship, specifically studying the experiences of artists who volunteer to mentor ex-offenders from an arts based perspective. Findings suggest the reasons for becoming a mentor vary across the board, nevertheless it is linked to arts-based support, personal experience and professional development. Secondly, mentoring in the CJS has enabling and disabling factors and lastly the needs of mentors and mentees are explored in regards to timings, experiences and expectations.

Mentoring those in Prison and on Probation

In a criminal justice context, a mentor is described as a person providing prisoners and those who are on probation with informal support, advice and guidance. The Ministry of Justice (2010) has embraced mentoring in its advocacy of the need for new approaches to reducing re-offending. A large body of research explores the benefits of mentoring (see Chao *et al.*, 1992, Levinson *et al.*, 1978, Ragin & Scandura, 1999, Roche, 1979, White, 2014, Whitely *et al.*, 1992). This paper is particularly interested in how mentorship affects those doing the mentoring.

Holmes *et al* (2010) states “mentoring is best described as a series of complex interactions between two individuals who have as their primary purpose the growth of the mentee” (2010: 336). Mentoring takes many forms, some organisations recruit ex-offenders as mentors, others volunteer, some are employed. All offer various benefits, ex-offenders bring about the possible shared experience of imprisonment and the latter can bring an understanding of life and processes outside of prison (see Bringing Hope, The Koestler Trust and The Samaritans). The mentoring process can be beneficial to both mentor and mentee and the pairing seeks to promote prosocial behaviour through guidance and support (Hucklesby & Wincup, 2014). Through mentoring, mentors gain some understanding of their own challenges and difficulties (Philip and Hendrys, 2000).

Mentors from similar backgrounds to the mentee in terms of gender, race and ethnicity are reported to be effective (Fletcher *et al.*, 2009 & Jucovy, 2006). Research has explored the

optimum frequency of meetings, with weekly contact deemed effective timing (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2007).

After 12 hours of contact with a volunteer mentor, there were reports of improved educational attainment and improved relationships with family, friends and peers (Tierney *et al.*, 1995). Similar sentiments are echoed by the Centre for Social Justice (2014) where mentoring is thought to be effective at reducing reoffending when the meetings are longer than one or two sessions: “we believe that the ideal mentoring period is six to 12 months” (Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), 2014: 33). Though, as a largely unpaid voluntary activity, many mentors face time constraints as a function of fulltime jobs and family responsibilities.

The Impact of Mentoring on Mentors

As noted, very little is written on the experiences of mentors generally and even less about those who mentor ex-offenders. The benefits of mentoring on the mentor are documented (see Ragin and Scandura, 1999) nonetheless this research focused on workplace mentoring, rather than mentoring from a criminal justice context. There is limited consideration of the experiences of mentors, we might expect that both enabling and disabling factors could be intensified when working with highly marginalised groups or through working in emotionally intense environments. Mentorships are described as intense interpersonal relationships (Kram, 1985) and contain both positive and negative experiences (see Eby & Allen, 2002, Evans, 2005, Ragin *et al.*, 2000, Scandura, 1998 and Wood & Duck, 1995).

Motivation and dedication from the mentor and mentee are required. Satisfaction with relationships influences an individual’s choice to continue to invest or to forsake the relationship (Rusbult, 1983). Ex-offenders aspiring to pursue their artistic interest post release can sometimes have unrealistic expectations. Duck (1984) suggests that unmet expectations are a significant aspect of ending a relationship; arguably this can also be applied to a mentor-mentee relationship. A collective understanding of the experiences of mentoring ex-offenders is few and far between. Literature is limited to looking at mentoring in a generalised context, rather than from a criminal justice context.

Rehabilitation and Desistance

The way in which rehabilitation is currently viewed has shifted from the assumption that offenders are unable to be rehabilitated and ‘nothing works’, to the notion that there are important components in the rehabilitation process. The Good Lives Model of offender rehabilitation (GLM) is grounded in the ethical concept of human dignity (see Purvis *et al.*, 2011, Ward 2002, Ward and Syversen, 2009), giving the individual opportunities and the capacity of ‘securing primary human goods’ (Ward & Brown 2004: 246), in socially acceptable and personally meaningful ways (KeKe, 1989; Rapp 1998). The GLM is a strength-based rehabilitation framework that is responsive to an offender’s particular interests, abilities, and aspirations. It directs practitioners to construct intervention plans that help offenders acquire the capabilities to achieve outcomes that are personally meaningful to them (Purvis *et*

al., 2011). A related assumption is a premise that ex-offenders, like all humans, value certain states of mind and experiences, “primary goods emerge out of basic needs, while instrumental or secondary goods provide concrete ways of securing these goods” (Ward & Brown 2004, Ward *et al.*, 2006). Individuals’ therefore attempt to achieve primary human goods (Emmons 1999 & Ward, 2002) i.e. happiness; family; romantic relationships; excellence in place and work (Ward, 2002 & 2004).

The Centre for Social Justice found approximately 40–50 charities and Voluntary Sector Organisations (VSOs) are conducting a large portion of work, funding in the main was obtained by non-government sources (CSJ 2014: 8). They train and deploy around 3,000 mentors in England and Wales and 90 per cent are part-time volunteers. Irrespective of the growth of mentoring services very little research has been conducted in this field (Bucks, 2018). Joliffe and Farrington (2007) reviewed 18 studies that looked at the impact of mentoring on reoffending and reported that only 7 studies found mentoring had a significant impact in reducing reoffending. The success of mentoring is where mentors spend greater time interacting with mentees, and when mentoring is used alongside other interventions.

The impact of limited social networks and social capitals is documented (see Brown and Ross, 2010a) Mentoring played a role in dealing with such deficits and allowed individuals to build positive relations with mentors. Brown and Ross (2010b) reported relational benefits where individuals enjoyed speaking to someone, encounters were not judgemental and mentors were able to help with “prosocial methods of resolving their issues.” (Singh *et al.*, 2018: 5). The work of Brown and Ross (2010a, 2010b) represents “one of the few studies that have examined mentoring using a more inclusive definition of desistance... studies that have looked at the efficacy of mentoring have generally used reoffending as a proxy for failure to desist (see Blechman *et al.*, 2000; Joliffe & Farrington, 2007; Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2006)” (Singh *et al.*, 2018: 5). Alternative indicators of post release success need to be considered, in some instances a person may reduce substance use and reconnect with family, often these achievements are not recognised as indicators of post release success (Carlton and Segrave, 2016)

Methodology

Birmingham City University won a bid to conduct research into understanding the experiences of art-based mentoring. This study is based on the experiences of eleven voluntary mentors, all of whom were mentoring artists in prison or on probation. It must be noted that all mentors volunteered with the same arts mentoring organisation (AMO). Mentors who had completed or were close to completing their target number of mentoring sessions were selected for interview. The AMO has a record of all mentor-mentee relationships, mentors who were involved in active relationships, or who had recently come to the end of the mentoring programme were contacted by the AMO. The nature of the research was explained to the mentors; subsequently, the AMO provided the researcher with the contact details of mentors that expressed an interest in sharing their experiences of art-based mentoring. The

status and frequency of mentoring sessions **were** documented, a designated employee from the AMO would manage the case and regular communication with the mentor and mentee was maintained. This was to ensure the mentor-mentee relationship was satisfactory.

Ethical approval was granted by Birmingham City University Business, Law and Social Sciences Faculty Ethics Committee with the assurance that all names were to be anonymised, instead utilising pseudonyms. The research was conducted in accordance with the British Society of Criminology Code of Ethics. Interviews with the mentors and mentees were conducted between January – June 2016. This study utilised a qualitative approach, which included the use of **semi-structured** interviews and observation notes.

Sample

Mentors are artists who received training to mentor artists that show initial potential and enthusiasm for the arts. Mentors worked in a variety of artistic fields, including visual (painting, drawing, sculpture, film and animation, illustration) the mentors all resided in the United Kingdom. The AMO from which mentors were recruited, paired mentors with individuals who shared similar artistic interest. Mentors and mentees documented their interests in the form of an application form which was submitted to the AMO. Additionally, mentors discussed the ways they could best support mentees. The mentoring partnership was assigned at the point of the mentee's transition from prison to the community.

Preparation of mentors for their work involved successful completion of a **3-day** group training course run by the AMO at the organisation's office within training rooms. This comprised of engaging in discussions, group work and **role-play** of scenarios that could arise in the mentor-mentee relationship. Mentors were advised on how to manage mentee expectations, timing, contact and meetings. The approach of the training emphasised the freedom/discretion of mentors who were encouraged to plan creative sessions based upon their creative **backgrounds** and encouraged to share their expertise with their mentee. Mentors received an information pack about their mentees which included examples of their work, and there was an exchange of letters before the first meeting. Mentors and mentees maintained frequent contact with the AMO through meetings, phone calls and emails.

Mentees were not given training as **such** but had to demonstrate an interest and passion for the arts. This was demonstrated in their submission of **artwork** to the AMO, competitions and their application form. Examples of areas explored in the interviews included mentees' arts interest; interests distinct from the arts; aspirations for the future and personal development. Mentees came from a range of criminal history backgrounds and a full risk assessment and agreement from probation and prison were essential for mentee participation.

In theory, mentors are required to provide mentees with ten face-to-face mentoring sessions over **twelve months**. The duration of sessions was very much dependent on the activity that took place, for example, visiting an exhibition would use more hours (2-3 hours) than those

who met for a coffee and a brief discussion. Data collected from the AMO shows that in general mentoring meetings ranged between 7-10 sessions **over a year**, and the hours used per session also differed. Mentors and mentees mutually agreed on where the activity took place, ideas were presented to the AMO who approved or disapproved activities. Additionally, funding was provided for activities and light refreshments. Activities were in line with the guidelines set out by the AMO and found in the mentee information pack, including activities based around building confidence; expanding knowledge of the arts; attending arts and cultural exhibitions, and supporting applications for further education.

Mentors and mentees are not always from the same geographic location, on many occasions' mentees and mentors travel for planned sessions. The deciding factor of assigning mentors and mentees was not so much centred on the location, rather on the similarity of art forms. Mentor-mentee relationships involve a combination of interactions, the majority of which are face to face contact. The AMO provided mobile phones for mentors which allowed them to contact mentees and schedule intervention **sessions without** using personal phones.

Table 1 and 2 are examples of the format of data documented by the AMO.

Table 1 shows the documentation of completed mentor-mentee relationships.

Completed									
Date of Match	Mentors Name	Mentees Name	Area of Arts interest	Location	Anticipated no of Sessions	No of Sessions Completed	Hours	Person Managing	Date Completed
Jan 2016	Kate Smith	James Dean	Visual	London	10	9	25	Jackie Roberts	MENTORING COMPLETED – Jan 2017
March 2015	Aaron Scott	David Green	Visual	Manchester	10	7	15	Mary Martin	MENTORING COMPLETED – Mar 2016
August 2014	Jo Robinson	Claire Taylor	Visual and Craft	Birmingham	8	8	20	Jackie Roberts	MENTORING COMPLETED – Sept 2015

Table 2 shows the documentation of active mentoring relationships

Active Relationships – Ongoing									
Date of Match	Mentors Name	Mentees Name	Area of Arts interest	Location	Anticipated no of Sessions	No of Sessions Completed	Hours	Person Managing	Summary of Recent Contact
January 2018	Jason Livingston	Mark Brown	Writing	Liverpool	9	0	0	Jackie Roberts	First meeting is at an art gallery on Saturday 20th January at 2.30 pm
August 2017	Owen James	Charlotte Higgins	Visual	London	7	4	13	Jackie Roberts	Have had their fourth session at the Ikon gallery –

									everything went well
March 2017	Angelina Brown	Alexia Smith	Craft	Manchester	9	2	4	Claire Brown	Good second session. Alexia enrolled on art-based course at college

Data Collection and Analysis

The author adopted the role of an ethnographer, attending mentor-mentee meetings and partaking in the scheduled activities. Both mentors and mentees were given time to decide whether to participate (or not) in the study. Participation was voluntary and the process of withdrawal was explained and visited throughout the research process. The AMO facilitated the research by identifying a number of mentors who volunteered alongside their mentees to partake in the research. Mentor-mentee sessions were observed **over six months**, interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were manually analysed by reading, coding and collating data through thematic analysis. This study adopted an anti-positivist methodology (Bryman 2008; Hayes 2000), with the view that understanding is only possible from the subjective perspective of those concerned.

The topics covered in mentor interviews were centred on the mentors' previous arts background, training and mentoring experience, length of service, and overall experience of mentoring ex-offenders from an arts-based perspective. In regards to analysis, this involves a first phase of listening to audio recordings and then transcribing data. The second phase involved the reading and **re-reading** of transcripts. Lastly, the third phase we formulated key themes and discussed these amongst ourselves as authors to ensure validity. Direct quotes from participants were used for illustrative purposes, using **gender-specific** pseudonyms.

Limitations

This study is based on a small sample of mentor-mentee pairs from one AMO, **therefore**, generalisation based on the results is limited. Additional data was based on observational reports and **semi-structured** interviews. Despite limitations, this study has produced new findings and supports data from prior studies which have explored mentoring in the CJS (see Brown and Ross 2010a, Buck 2018, Singh *et al.*, 2018) therefore enhancing the knowledge base of the experiences of mentors who mentor ex-offenders in an arts based capacity.

Results and Findings

The collection of data consisted of transcribed semi-structured interviews and observation notes. Enabling and constraining factors could be broadly grouped into four overarching categories; (1) *Reasons for Becoming a Mentor*; (2) *Criminal Justice System*; (3) *Limitations and Constraints*; and (4) *Mentee-Focused Factors*.

Observations

Energy, enthusiasm, arts expertise and organisational skills are vital to the mentoring programme. Meetings were scheduled in advance to maintain and promote punctuality for mentor and mentee. **Nevertheless**, on a few occasions, the mentee was late due to unforeseen circumstances such as train cancellations and diversions. The importance of punctuality is significant to creating a positive routine, preparing the mentee for the next stage in life: **academia**, employment or training. **Non-art** related discussions are usually initiated by the mentee and little reference is made to criminal offences. Meetings focused **on arts** and artistic development. Both mentor and mentee play a vital role in the mentoring process. Building trust and rapport encourages both parties that they are doing a good job. Two out of eleven mentees were female and nine males. Female mentees were paired with female mentors; factors that informed this decision were based on mentor and mentee preferences and artistic interest. At the **time of the study**, the sample size of mentor pairs made up the majority of the total population, taking into account that approximately five mentor-mentee pairs declined to partake in the study. Approximately twenty mentor-mentee pairs were in place and the majority of male mentees were paired with female mentors. The difference in gender reportedly did not **impact mentoring** relationships. Mentors also benefited from this process by revitalising their own practice and witnessing mentees develop and progress. Mentors held mentees to account in regards to progress, punctuality, aims and goals. At the beginning of each meeting time was spent 'checking in'. The researcher built a rapport with the mentors and mentees. After observations, mentors were contacted via email enabling interviews to occur face to face, with some exceptions via telephone.

Reasons for Becoming a Mentor

Mentors emphasised a strong belief and commitment to the value and importance of the arts in regards to rehabilitation, specifically resettlement and reintegration. **For this paper**, rehabilitation refers to desistance from crime. 'Becoming a mentor', for some was based on past experience of working within the CJS. Significance was placed on 'hard to reach' groups, whilst others knew people who had partaken in arts based therapeutic intervention programmes. **This is important as it illustrates that personal experiences and access was fundamental in the decision-making process.** Those expressing this view wanted to assist people in prison and post release in an arts-based capacity. Mentoring was a way to develop insights into the lived realities of artists, whose offending backgrounds presented them with unique challenges. The volunteering experience gave some the ability to give back to society, in the form of teaching, encouragement and support. Less prominent were views relating to mentor's personal experience and enhancing one's own artistic development; only

one mentor explained their own artistic practice as being an influential factor to why they chose to become a mentor. The benefits of art in relation to expression was articulated,

I've been in a fortunate position that I can have some time off for my creative writing at the moment and I was looking for ways to give something back. AMO reaches out to people who are in tough situations... actually being part of them getting back into society (*Daniel, Creative Writing*)

I have always believed that art is a wonderful way of a person expressing their feelings. Especially for people who aren't very able to express themselves (*Agnes, Painter*)

The role of art was viewed positively as a means of expression and sometimes in unconventional ways. The arts have the ability to positively impact people from all walks of life. This emerged as an important reason as to why many wanted to become mentors. Throughout the observations it was clear that mentoring was centred on the arts, enabling a starting point of conversation, nurturing a positive experience of mentoring to blossom. Prior to becoming a mentor, some had the desire to be involved in an art based rehabilitative programme and were personally aware of individuals who had benefited from being mentored,

I knew about the scheme because two of the guys I knew were being mentored and I could see the value of it for them (*Katie, Sculpture*)

It is something I wanted to do for a long time. I wanted to combine the arts with an area of voluntary support (*Ed, Illustrator*)

Witnessing the benefit arts-based mentoring had on others also emerged as an influential factor in deciding to join a mentoring programme. Mentees had friends who in the past had utilised the services provided by the AMO and knew people who had volunteered and benefitted from these services. This provided an area of mutual understanding between the mentor and mentee. As Agnes states above, the arts provided an alternative platform for mentees to communicate where they would otherwise experience additional challenges.

My background is in theatre and arts... I was interested in motivation around artwork, mentees obviously have a lot of difficulties to overcome in terms of resettlement and health. So it is that complex picture (*Sarah, Performing Arts*)

The reasons for becoming mentors were similar across the board and the overall consensus was the belief in the ability of the arts to support individuals who are in prison and post release. Mentoring is a key function that not only benefits the artist in prison and on probation in relation to their **artwork**, it can also provide further support in relation to

resettlement. Re-entry into a community was illustrated throughout the mentoring sessions, in turn, this can positively impact the health and wellbeing of those involved.

Wellbeing and the core conditions of peer mentoring **are** explored by Buck (2018), this paper particularly draws upon the core condition 'caring'. Findings in this paper show that mentors had a genuine interest in the arts and wanted to utilise this platform to support ex-offenders. Mentors cared about their mentee's motivations, aspirations and development.

Acknowledging care and emotion in a criminal justice context does not naturally coincide with criminological research. Knight (2014) asserts that the CJS as we know it is there to respond to, control and punish criminal behaviour "As far as possible the system aims to exclude emotion on the basis that emotions are likely to interfere with and distort the process of justice" (Knight 2014: 2). Buck (2018) states "Rarer still, are calls for the nurturance of care of offenders" (2018: 193). Dependent on the offence, emotions are presented in an "emotional and mostly punitive public and political discourse" (Karstedt 2011: 3). Care featured heavily in the mentors' decision to mentor ex-offenders. Care was expressed by supporting individuals in a bid for overall change. Indeed, mentors volunteered for different reasons. A common view was that mentoring provided opportunities to help mentees move beyond the criminal labels that have been applied and to rebuild mentees confidence not, only in their ability as an artist, but as citizens.

Mentors sought to help mentees reframe their identity from ex-offenders to artists, as they were artists in their own rights. Mentors voluntary status was used as a means to emphasise their genuine care for the cause. Essentially, they provide time and expertise in return for no financial gain. Care in the broader sense is often stereotypically attributed to gender roles, "Care is a feminine ethic, not a universal one. Caring is what good women do, and the people who care are doing women's work" (Gilligan 2011: 19). The majority of mentors in **this study** were women, yet the notion of care and compassion within arts-based mentoring was similar across the board. There is not a blueprint on how one portrays interest or care, rather this is a subjective process.

Criminal Justice System

Different elements of the CJS were explored ranging from individual members of prison staff to overarching Ministry of Justice policies. Interestingly, mentors' who raised this topic were those who had mentored someone whilst they were still in prison, as opposed to those on probation or who had completed their sentence. In regards to Ministry of Justice policy, mentors were vocal about their concerns relating to austerity which was having a negative impact upon the arts in prison. This they believed was impacting the access of materials and their mentees ability to access arts related activities. **Also**, some mentors felt contracting-out was becoming visible within their own mentoring. The responsibility of the state for example: enhancing employability of ex-offenders was being transferred to the voluntary sector. For those mentoring prisoners, prison policies were another challenging aspect of the mentoring experience. This impacted the mentor-mentee relationship which saw delays in security

checks and the lack of materials is particularly challenging for both mentor and mentee. Balancing a hands-on approach is challenging, specifically referring to the approach of some members of prison staff and probation officers in the mentoring process. Mentors acknowledged that the mentoring role has challenges, nonetheless, the overall experience with prison staff was positive,

So, we had a meeting at the prison which was unfortunately attended by his art teacher and someone else from probation, which I was not warned about so it was quite - it wasn't the most helpful meeting. Everybody was putting in their ideas which really was a bit much (*Agnes, Painter*)

Agnes suggests that there is a fine line between being helpful and becoming too involved in the mentoring process. The encounter was quite overwhelming and potentially a harmful dynamic to the mentoring process. Within mentoring sessions, mentors and mentees would often discuss the challenges mentees experienced when they were in prison. Frustrations relating to the lack of resources and limited access was frequently expressed. A mentors' role is multifaceted, the mentoring relationship in some cases is described as more complex when the mentee is in prison.

Sadly, I think the art teacher is leaving at the end of this term... They can't always get envelopes to put the letter in...as a mentor, you have to appreciate all of those things. All of those things that interfere with their creativity (*Ella, Writer*)

It is the culture of prison, and it makes such a difference to know things about what it is like in there...it is the lived experience and the insights of ex-prisoners which really helped...He was really listening to me and it was like a door I was opening and he was walking through it (*Ella, Writer*)

As suggested by Ella's quotes art is an expression, it is fluid, free and without bounds. It should not be constrained, restricted or suppressed. Therefore, dealing with a CJS that is constrained and restricted does not naturally coincide with the ethos of artistic expression, which mentors are used to in their day-to-day art forms. This specifically relates to mentoring within a prison setting, mentors and mentees regularly discuss the impact of restrictions and there is a concern for the individual post release in regards to access to materials. Mentors report that their mentees found it difficult to financially support their art form upon release, mentors provide advice about charities that can assist and shops which sell art materials at reasonable prices. Katie highlights the multi-faceted role of being a mentor and the role they play within the CJS,

I don't think (AMO) expected us to do that anyway but I do notice within the pack they give us there are things talked about like job

searches... That is another government thing – get them into work and get them in college (*Katie, Sculpture*)

Although Katie did not feel obliged to encourage mentees to discuss job searches and apply to college, Katie perceives that the responsibility of the state is slowly being transferred to the voluntary sector. Having observed mentoring sessions, this came to fruition on a number of occasions. Mentees would often ask for help and advice regarding college and university applications, help with job applications and so forth. The role of a mentor does not solely revolve around arts, care and support **are** heavily incorporated. There were a number of challenges for those mentoring mentees who were still in prison as the mentor-mentee relationship is restricted to some extent. Understanding the impact of location, freedom and liberties is important and consideration is given to the scheduling of visits, targets, limited resources in prison and the limitation of 'creative spaces' which can impact the production of art. Mentors are mindful of situations which may arise and do not set unrealistic expectations as there are some instances beyond the mentor and mentees control.

Mentoring those in prison presents a set of unique challenges and artistic development. Mentoring sessions are often halted or cut short. Staffing levels, policy and practices within prisons are at times largely **unavoidable** and can have a domino effect upon the mentoring process. Mentors by an large, are viewed **differently** to prison and probation officers. Their approach going into prison was centred on the mentees artistic interest rather than offending behaviour. Often mentors would advocate on behalf of the mentee i.e. sending in materials such as books and enquiring on other related matters. The needs of mentees in prison and post release are different; those who mentor people in prison are faced with a host of external and internal factors that can potentially impact the mentoring process.

Limitations and Constraints

A key theme that emerged was resources in terms of having the time to commit to mentoring. Many of those interviewed were employed, with professional commitments and schedules. Mentors in the early stages of their mentoring role experienced some doubt in regards to how helpful they would be as mentors. This was less prevalent amongst those who had **the** experience of working in a criminal justice **setting** or had partaken in prior voluntary work. These mentors had pre-existing knowledge of the structures and processes around criminal justice institutions. A mentor's role within the CJS is multifaceted,

You have got to have time to do this, so you have got to be financially – you need to be able to afford to give time to do this (*Katie, Sculpture*)

Financial stability and being self-employed were enabling factors which provided flexibility, this was helpful as mentees generally requested to meet during the traditional working week. Through observations and interview documentation, it was clear that the AMO pay for expenses such as travel cost and admission fees. Above Katie refers to independent artists who rely on their **artwork** as their sole income. In some cases, mentors need to take a day of

work which can significantly affect their income. Mentors seek to accommodate the needs of the mentee and in some cases, the mentee may be restricted by licence conditions. Mentors consider the complexities surrounding the mentee post release and timing is another limitation that is considered,

Sometimes you are so busy to commit to a day or half a day to it in advance and then you get an offer of work. It is tricky sometimes (*Ella, Illustrator*)

It is time consuming...it is sometimes just too much, I feel "How am I meant to fit all this in?" You have to realise that it takes up more time. It is not just about seeing the person in the session. (*Louise, Illustrator*)

Mentors pursue a good mentor-mentee relationship, however, still have to consider their professional and personal lives. Observing mentoring sessions, it was clear to see the excitement and then disappointment when mentors were not available on the initial date requested by the mentee. This is a difficult experience for the mentor and mentee, in most instances, mentors felt obliged to fulfil their mentee's request. Restrictions are centred on the mentors' ability to balance the role of being a mentor, artist and in some cases having additional **full-time** responsibilities. Observing mentoring sessions from the initial stages to the **end** shows that meetings are usually scheduled in advance and **sometimes** mentors and mentees travel some distance to meet. Mentoring sessions usually take up a considerable amount of time; therefore, a **two-hour** window is not enough. Mentors tend to allocate the entire day or half a day to the mentoring session. Mentors' responsibilities do differ and Sarah's employment provides an element of flexibility,

It is not too bad for me because I am on a flexitime system at work... usually mentees want to meet on a weekday... I think because I've had some experience of working in an institution, I felt confident... You need to be passionate about art, whether it is your own or other people, you have to have that excitement (*Sarah, Performing Arts*)

Sarah's experience of working within institutions has proved beneficial and has enhanced her experience as a mentor. Working with mentees post **release** sees the mentee at times change their mind about meeting at the last minute or will request to meet at short notice. This differs significantly to structured visiting times and schedules within a prison setting. Another challenge mentor's experience is self-doubt, initially, Danielle and Jane doubted their ability to be being a 'good' mentor,

Would I be of any use? Would I be able to cope? ... As soon as I get back from the journey, I write the session report and think about what we might do next time (*Danielle, Writer*)

I was worried that I wasn't going to be able to do the right thing... That they just weren't going to be that interested. So, I was nervous in my own ability I guess *(Jane, Painter/Illustrator)*

Danielle and Jane's concerns echo the experiences of mentors in this study. Mentoring is a continuous journey, skills, confidence and experience is gained in time. Mentors want to plan and deliver the best sessions possible and provide mentees with a list of possible activities for up and coming sessions, this gives the mentee something to look forward to. Mentors self-reflect upon the mentoring role, mentoring sessions and future sessions. Self-reflection in regards to being a mentor and an artist enables the continuation of **flourishing** arts based mentoring relationship for those in prison and post release.

Although the challenges of mentoring **are** explored, mentors also discuss the qualities needed to be a mentor,

It is about listening and being patient with things, letting things evolve *(Kerry, Visual Artist)*

You have to be very open and willing and you have to be very present and listen carefully *(Daniel, Creative Writing)*

Someone who is punctual, reliable, consistent...and someone who takes notes well...we fill in a session feedback sheet and I always fill mine in almost straight away *(Agnes, Painter)*

Kerry refers to patience, listening skills, punctuality and reliability as the qualities needed to be a mentor. Training is provided by the AMO and **the** first-hand experience of mentoring is where many adapt and enhance skills. The disclosure of past offences does present challenges and often mentees would discuss childhood and prison experiences which can be quite traumatic for all those concerned.

Mentee-focused Factors

Several perspectives emerged on mentors' thoughts on mentee-focused factors, some of which are thought to facilitate or constrain the mentoring relationship. Mentee motivation is emphasised in regards to completing and developing their artwork. The more motivated the mentee, the easier the mentor finds the relationship. Some challenges are reported in regards to unrealistic expectations, mentees plans for their artwork and dealing with disappointments. Another factor is the impact of the arts mentoring programme on prisoners' post release,

He had been in prison for such a long time, he hadn't been out and about, and he hadn't been to a gallery. He felt uncomfortable. So, my role was just helping him know how to go there, look at art and talk about it. It was about accompanying him being a soundboard. *(Kerry, Visual Artist)*

Going into a museum with him he would touch everything and get told off all the time...When you talk to someone in prison you go right next to them because you don't want everyone to hear you. In the outside world that is a real invasion of your personal space. I found that quite a lot but it makes all the difference knowing why they do it. It takes a long time to break that habit *(Ella, Illustrator)*

I think for him meeting other people who were writing and breaking down the barrier was important. Showing him they were just normal people doing normal stuff normalised it all for him. Also just getting him outside of his own head a bit because as you can imagine, coming out of prison he is very much in his own head all the time *(Daniel, Creative Writing)*

Kerry refers to the impact of lengthy prison sentences and mentees adapting to life in the outside world. In essence, mentors play a role in reintegrating individuals back into society. Kerry's role was to accompany and support to some extent, and similar sentiments are expressed by Ella, who discussed prison and the consequences of being institutionalised. Ella's mentee unintentionally invaded her personal space. This was frequently witnessed when observing several mentor-mentee meetings. Mentees would speak to their mentors and stand close to them and would often touch the artwork on display. Mentors advised mentees appropriately and discreetly and if the mentee was in the mentor's personal space the mentor would step back, this would remind the mentee of the boundaries. The impact of institutionalisation is considered, Ella puts this into context which demonstrates her understanding. The assumption that those who have been recently released from prison will be accustomed to conventional societal behaviours is unrealistic. Rather mentors were aware that reintegration and rehabilitation was an ongoing process.

The impact of imprisonment is explored and the emphasis is placed on doing normal things which forms a part of the rehabilitative process. The role and motivation of the mentee is vital,

I suppose if I was with someone who was less motivated perhaps I would need to be a lot more directive. But he is so motivated that I just let things evolve *(Agnes, Painter)*

I have a Mentee who is particularly wonderful, he is very responsive, very communicative but as soon as anything gets too difficult for him he withdraws and that is very difficult *(Louise, Illustrator)*

I think this is the thing, to start off the mentees are super enthusiastic and that is what you sort of have to put a lid on. Because they have spent their time in prison thinking they are going to come out and write a blockbuster and it doesn't work like that. *(Phillip, Illustrator)*

Agnes, Louise and Phillip explore the importance of motivating mentees. The following are crucial to the mentor-mentee relationship, responsiveness, communication, and the ability to give and receive constructive criticism. There were times within observations, where mentees arrived late due to a lack of communication from the mentee. The expectations of mentees need to be appropriately managed; Phillip refers to remaining balanced and realistic about future opportunities, whilst Louise discusses the difficulties some mentees experience, in regards to overcoming difficulties and managing expectations. For mentees, art is a motivating factor which leads them to live more positive and meaningful lives.

Often, the mentees may experience high and low points in life, experiences and expectations. The arts provide a degree of separation from the regime they have become accustomed to in prison. Amongst mentees, there are often unrealistic expectations of life in the real world, there is a need to support mentees visions and often mentors discuss realistic goals. Arts in the lives of mentees is something that ties in with the GLM (see Purvis *et al.*, 2011, Ward 2002, Ward and Syversen, 2009). Mentors often focus on primary and secondary goods by identifying what is important to the mentee and supporting them in setting out realistic measures to achieve this goal. Mentees require ways in which they can secure human goods, for example, happiness and excellence in work is very much dependent on the mentees ability to receive consistent support. Mentors social capital mean they are aware of the challenges of generating consistent income from producing art. The inability to make the desired income can impact the mentees overall wellbeing, as securing primary human goods in socially acceptable and meaningful ways is of utmost importance (Ward, 2002). The perception of life outside of prison is shaped by prolonged time spent in prison and limited contact with the outside world. Consequently, the reality is often skewed, through interviews and observations the mentor becomes a point of contact to the outside world, especially for those who have no contact with family members and friends. Both mentor and mentee can listen and interact with each other and partake in new artistic experiences, in the hope of development. This moulds new realities for the mentee, as their voice is not overlooked but central to the mentor-mentee process.

Through observations, mentors are very accommodating to mentees and ensure they are comfortable in sometimes busy environments. This form of mentoring revolves around the mentees artistic interest. Mentors utilise their social capital which echoes similar findings to that reported by (Brown & Ross, 2010b). This included advising mentees on arts, employment, education, assisting mentees with college applications and art exhibitions. Mentors use their experience, status and connections to strengthen the social capital of their mentees (Brown & Ross 2010b). It was clear through the observations that artistic practices varied i.e. some mentees brought artwork to the meeting and others took photos of their artwork to receive verbal feedback from mentors. Painting, sculptors and drawers would often take pictures of their artwork, whilst writers would bring their material due to size and practicality.

The process of rehabilitation and reintegration took place throughout the mentorship, mentors support mentees' in the form of encouragement, advice and putting in place

practical steps to help individuals desist from crime. Throughout observations, this was illustrated in many forms in regards to possible desistance, mentees wanted mentors to set tasks so they would occupy their time productively. Producing art is reported to be **time-consuming** and mentees would often explain that they would prefer to occupy their time in the arts instead of being drawn back to a life of crime. **Concerning** reintegration, mentors would attempt to reintegrate mentees into arts communities such as art groups, exhibitions and art galleries. **Additionally**, mentees reintegration into the mainstream educational system in the form of applying to college and university, and integrating with lecturers and students on courses. Mentees would often update mentors on their social development, the friends they had made and their own professional networks. Singh et al (2018) discuss mentoring as a means of promoting desistance and states “mentoring has been applied in the criminal justice context, typically as a tertiary intervention strategy to address relational deficits in the lives of offenders to reduce the likelihood of reoffending.” (2018: 4). Reintegration and rehabilitation are supported through the mentoring process, mentors accompany ex-offenders in taking small steps towards their journey to desistance.

Discussion

This paper offers insight **into** mentors’ worlds and experiences, conveying a message to new recruits. It discusses components that are important to those who have **the** first-hand experience of mentoring within the CJS. To eliminate repetition, three points of advice for new recruits will be briefly discussed. Firstly, mentors genuinely believe that arts-based mentoring could help those in prison and post release. Although mentors discuss mentees unrealistic expectations at times, mentors also had expectations of their own. Therefore, the expectations of mentors and mentees need to be managed. At times mentors were disappointed if the mentee was not engaged or if they had a lack of motivation. Further illustrating that although mentors promoted the transforming function of arts-based mentoring, one has to acknowledge that mentees often have complex lives, which can impact their ability to be receptive and engaged. Consequently, motivation and engagement may fluctuate, which is not necessarily a reflection on the mentor.

Secondly, the mentoring process can be **time-consuming** and, in some instances, require individuals to work around personal schedules. In some cases, mentors take a day or half a day **off** work which can have financial **implications**. For those who seek to mentor in the future being self-employed is an enhancing factor, due to elements of flexibility. For those who are not self-employed, the prospect of having to meet mentees on weekdays should be taken into consideration. New mentors should, **therefore**, state their availability from the initial pairing stage. The mentee can then decide whether (or not) this is suitable for their needs. This also will alleviate some of the pressure mentors face in regards to availability and time. Those new to mentoring should be aware of the potential impact of mentoring not only on the **mentees** but on their personal lives.

Thirdly, all mentors in this study **complement** the AMO and the mentoring process. Some of whom have mentored a range of different mentees over the years. There is a consensus across the board that mentoring is a multifaceted role, one which is more complex when the mentee is in prison. New mentors should be aware of some of the complexities that may arise. Often engagement is not solely with the AMO and the mentee, rather those who mentor individuals in prison are in contact with prison and probation officers, teachers and the mentee. Prison visits need to be organised and some are often cancelled, essentially the needs of the mentee are often different behind the prison walls. Therefore, when one enters into volunteering, they should be mindful of the subtle differences in the mentoring process. To conclude, the AMO provides a valuable service one that benefits the mentor, mentee and society at large.

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