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Do We Need the Users' Voice? An Empirical Research Example Comparing Views of Service Providers and Ex-Prisoners: Implications for Practice

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Introduction

Understanding the rehabilitation needs of a person in contact with the criminal justice system is a complex task, especially when it comes to facilitating their reintegration after release from prison. The

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effectiveness of rehabilitation processes is dependent on an understanding of the factors that can increase the risk of reoffending. Offenders often face similar challenges, both when entering prison and upon their release. Issues like substance abuse, violence, poor physical and mental health, unemployment and poor housing are common. Prison rehabilitation programmes are fundamental to address these needs and reduce recidivism in the long term. These rehabilitation programmes need to be flexible, in order to respond to the ever changing nature of the challenges and needs faced by prisoners. Hence, the services providing them need to be innovative and engage in constant service development, something often achieved in small steps and incrementally. At other times there are calls for radical changes in service delivery. Both are understood as social innovation (Hean et al., 2015).

User involvement is generally seen as important to the credibility of these social innovation interventions but involving prisoners or ex-prisoners in this process can be problematic because of the vulnerability of this group as well as security issues. Involving service users in service development can be demanding and time consuming (Slettebø et al., 2010). Bjørkly and Ødegård (2017) argue that although the service user voice is often very useful and a prerequisite for high quality research and innovation, user involvement is not always possible—for example due to the mental state of the service user or the fact that newly released ex-prisoners are often in a particularly vulnerable place in life. Involving them in research or service development may be synonymous with exposing them to unnecessary emotional stress.

However, encouraging prisoners/ex-prisoners' to reflect directly on their experience of a service or current life status, may be beneficial by raising their consciousness and motivation for a 'new life' upon or on release. Recovery-oriented practices, for example, focus upon strengthening the service user's recourses, promoting personal responsibility and positive identity and creation of hope. Empowering the service user, supporting development of self-government and gaining insight into issues of offender reintegration from the prisoner's perspective, has proven to be essential to the success of these recovery-oriented practices (Slade, 2013; Sjo & Sæbjørnsen, 2018; Landheim, 2016). This, however,

is often absent in practice. Larsen et al. (2019), for example, in a qualitative study of Norwegian re-offenders, found that there was a mismatch between the psycho-social needs expressed by offenders themselves and what the welfare services actually provided in the reintegration process. Similarly, Morse et al. (2014) reported experiences of an 'evil cycle' of relapse and recidivism, a result of what prisoner see their needs as being, being left unaddressed.

Balancing the benefits of prisoner direct engagement in innovation versus the challenges this may cause operationally, leads to questions whether service users should be included in the innovation processes with researchers and practitioners directly or whether the professional perspective of their needs might suffice.

Further, social innovation aside, we query whether an alignment of professional and offender/exoffender perspectives is also important for effective professional-prisoner relationships. Self efficacy may be a mediating factor here. Bandura (1994) describes self-efficacy as follows:

> Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. (Bandura, 1994, p. 1)

According to Bandura (ibid.), a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many different ways, but people who doubt their capabilities will shy away from difficult tasks that they see as personal threats. The most effective way to create a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences. For example, for ex-prisoners developing a skill and securing a job after release will go a long way to boosting their future self-esteem and efficacy. Another way is through the vicarious experiences provided by social models, such as seeing people similar to oneself having succeeded in their efforts. Ex-service users being engaged in service provision could provide such an opportunity. Strengthening people's beliefs in their ability to remain crime free can also be done by key people, such as the mentor, engaging

in social/verbal persuasion, which again can influence exoffenders to try hard enough to succeed and promote development of skills and a sense of personal efficacy. Modifying self-beliefs of efficacy may also be done by reducing stress reactions and altering' their negative emotional proclivities and misinterpretations of their physical states' (Bandura, 1994, p. 3). It is anticipated that self-efficacy is enhanced if both mentor and offender share views on the prospect of a positive future.

To reflect on these questions, this chapter will explore and compare the views of professional mentors working in the third sector offender mentorship organisation, with the views of the service users (ex-prisoners) engaged in this service. As in Chapter 14, Q methodology is used as the method for exploring this subjectivity.

Using Q Methodology to Compare Views

Several research approaches and methods could be used to explore different views of the rehabilitation process. The value of Q methodology as one of these (Stephenson, 1953; Brown, 1991/1992) and as a means to explore subjective perspectives (views) is explored elsewhere in this book (see Chapter 14). This chapter adds to this discussion by presenting its value in comparing differing perspectives, specifically of ex-prisoners and mentors. This value has been shown in other contexts by Ellingsen et al. (2012), for example, who applied Q methodology to compare the perceptions of foster children, foster parents and biological birth parents on the concept 'family'.

Following the approach taken by Ellingsen et al. (2012), the point of departure for the comparison described in this chapter was the 42 statements that were already developed and applied to capture the voice of ex-prisoners/service users (see Chapter 14 for ex-prisoner perspectives). The statements were developed through interviews with service users on their situation as ex-prisoners, their needs and available services that supported their reintegration back into society.

Each of these statements was then modified to capture the mentors' perspective of ex-prisoners' understanding of their situation (see Table

14.1, Chapter 14). For example the statement '*I am good at controlling my feelings and temper. I never get carried away by frustrations and things like that*', was changed to '*Most of them are good at controlling their feelings and temper. They don't get carried away by frustrations and things like that*'.

The modified statements (see Table 15.1) were then applied to two men and three women mentors using the Q method (see detail of method in Chapter 14). Hereby, the participants expressed views about the ex-prison service users' situation, needs and service provision, by sorting the 42 statements according to the degree to which they agreed with the statements. The ranking scale from −5 to +5 (see Fig. 14.1), gave the participants a choice of as many as 11 different ranking values for each statement. The results of the service providers/mentors Q sorts are presented in Table 15.1. The mentors were recruited from a volunteer organisation in southern England that provides services to exoffenders in order to facilitate their reintegration after leaving prison. The service provision encompassed meeting service users' various acute needs and mentoring. Two of the mentor participants were employed by the organisation and three performed voluntary work.

The results of the five mentors/service providers' Q sorts and the three Q factors (or average perspectives) presented in Chapter 14 constituted the total of eight 'participants' in a new factor analysis presented in Table 15.2. Due to the small number of mentor participants, an additional qualitative comparison of service providers' and service users' viewpoints was also conducted. While the factor analysis may reveal similar or shared perspectives between mentors and ex-prisoners, the qualitative comparison focused on differences in views. Six statements that seemed to represent the most differing views between the two participant groups, ex-prisoners and mentors, were selected for qualitative comparison and presentation here. The five mentor participants' Q sorts and the three service user average perspectives (factors) presented in Chapter 14 was included in this comparison.

Approvals were obtained from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD; Project Number 54746) and Bournemouth University Research Ethics Committee. All participants were informed about the research project before they voluntarily agreed to participate.

Table 15.1 Mentors' Q sorts

Mentors' Q sorts (M1–M5)

Stm.	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Statements 1–42
1	1	−1	−2	0	1	When they come out, they are often a bit shocked of all the different organisations that are there to help
2	0	3	4	3	0	In prison, they often feel like being left there with their own life crisis and nobody help to find out what kind of help that they need
3	−4	3	−3	1	1	Most of them have lost all ties with their family
4	5	2	0	4	3	Most of them really need treatment for anxiety and/or depression
5	−1	0	0	−3	2	Reading and writing are very difficult to most of them
6	−4	−4	−4	0	5	Most of them have somebody who really care for them, that has taken them under their wings
7	−3	−2	−3	−3	−3	Most of them, when they come out, have someone to help them to look for what help they can get
8	0	−2	−2	2	0	They find it easier talking to someone that has been in prison. It's the little things, little stories, they have a crack about it, they have a laugh
9	3	2	0	1	0	Most of them are brought up around crime and drugs and things that normal people wouldn't be doing…
10	−3	−3	−3	−3	1	Most of them have someone who really cares about them, that they can call at any time, just to help them thinking
11	1	1	3	5	1	We help them to become more aware of things that use to get them into trouble
12	2	−2	−1	0	−3	Most of them have plenty of skills and knowledge that would be useful in a decent job
13	−2	−3	−2	−4	−4	Many of them keep themselves strictly to straight people after release

Mentors' Q sorts (M1–M5)

Stm.	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Statements 1–42
14	-3	-4	-3	-5	-4	After release, many would say that their life is actually getting very well, and that they are looking forward to the future
15	-4	-5	-5	1	-1	I am one of the service providers who grew up with the same issues as them and I have managed to change from a criminal way of life
16	4	0	0	0	2	It's really important to most of them to get in contact with their family again
17	1	3	2	1	1	We always try to help them to believe that they are capable of changing their lifestyle
18	-1	0	-1	0	0	Most of them think that if they make serious decisions about starting a new life, no drugs and no crime, they are fully capable of doing it
19	-1	-1	-1	3	0	It's really useful to them to see probation weekly the first year after release
20	1	4	5	5	1	The most important to them is to get their own space, where they can go back and say 'this is my key, my bed, my things'
21	-1	-2	5	-1	-2	To get help in prison, you have to constantly be pushing them, until they start wondering why you are behaving like that
22	-5	-3	-5	-4	-4	When they come out, almost everything is normally prepared for them, also a place to live
23	3	1	1	4	5	If they had the resettlement team from the start, they would start working on themselves and on the resettlement in prison
24	0	4	2	-2	5	To many of them, it's frustrating that it takes so long to get to see the mental health services. If it was easier, they would have seen them long time ago
25	-3	2	1	3	-2	Prison does help them too. If they were just out on the street, they might not be able to start an education

(continued)

Table 15.1 (continued)

Mentors' Q sorts (M1–M5)

Stm.	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Statements 1–42
26	2	0	1	4	−2	If it weren't for us (service providers) they wouldn't have the stuff that they needed to start moving on in their lives. We try to help them to get back to normal
27	3	5	4	3	−1	It'd be easier to them if we (service providers) all kept in contact and collaborated. It'd be easier to them to meet all in one spot, rather than to see us all weekly
28	1	2	1	0	−1	They don't get anything out of probation. Probation just want to know that they are not taking drugs or doing crime
29	0	−3	−1	−1	−3	The prison officers really care about the prisoners
30	2	−1	3	1	2	Prison life isn't nice. It's similar to outside. People get robbed; people try to beg up for the need for the day and getting as much food as they can
31	−2	1	0	−1	4	Actually, I don't think they care too much if they have to go back prison again. Its almost like a holiday. Some even seem to like it there
32	0	−1	0	−1	3	In prison, they are asked what they are thinking about doing when they get out, like housing and getting a job…
33	0	0	1	−1	2	The only reason that they go to see EDP is that probation send them there
34	5	1	3	−2	4	Many of them change and start thinking completely different. They just want to live life as a normal person and don't want to do crime and drugs anymore

Mentors' Q sorts (M1–M5)

Stm.	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Statements 1–42
35	5	1	3	−2	4	When they get annoyed or frustrated most of them seem to forget all about what they've learnt about how to stay out of trouble
36	3	4	3	2	3	We talk with them about how they can handle different stressful situations that might occur
37	−2	−3	−3	−4	−1	When they are having some sort of crisis in their life, most of them always ask for help
38	4	0	2	2	3	When they get bad news or something like that, most of them use to take drugs/drink alcohol which often brings them into trouble
39	−1	−1	−2	−3	−1	They all want to move on in life, but after release most of them get charged for other, previous offences. Then they have to go back to prison
40	2	3	4	−2	0	The lack of contact between probation and other services often puts them in stressful situations, such as disturbing other appointments
41	4	5	2	2	4	It'd be better if we could come to see them before release, coming to speak to them so they get to know us, and we can make some plans
42	−5	−5	−4	−5	−5	Most of them are good at controlling their feelings and temper. They don't get carried away by frustrations and things like that

Table 15.2   Factor matrix with an X indicating a defining sort

Q sort	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
F1	0.8808	X	0.3231		0.1004	
F2	0.1708		0.7953	X	−0.2072	
F3	0.1581		0.5735		0.6331	X
M1	0.2599		−0.2406		0.7853	X
M2	0.1835		−0.0229		0.8275	X
M3	0.4757		−0.2158		0.7332	X
M4	−0.2120		0.1617		0.8249	X
M5	−0.0422		−0.4839		0.7255	X
Explained variance %	**15**		**18**		**44**	

Results

Q methodology represents a middle ground between quantitative and qualitative research techniques, and therefore a qualitative and quantitative analysis of values in a Q study is essential. In this section we will therefore first present the mentors' views, qualitatively including a brief interpretation of the overall configuration of the statements and reflection on some of the most conspicuous statement ratings, specifically. Thereafter, we will present the comparison, which include factor analysis and a qualitative comparison based on visual inspection of six selected statements where mentors and exoffenders disagreed the most.

The Mentors'/Service Providers' Views

Like the ex-prisoners in the service user study (Chapter 14), the five mentors performed a Q sort. The ratings that each mentor (M1–M5) gave the 42 statements are presented in Table 15.1

The Q sort results presented in Table 15.1, for some of the statements, the mentors seem more or less to agree. For example, the mentors seemed particularly to agree that the service users are not good at controlling their feelings and temper when they get frustrated (they gave statement #42 the score −5 or −4). There are some differences on other statements, although there are few examples of differences exceeding six of the 11 possible rating values (from −5 to +5). The greatest differences were in

statement #12 (ex-prisoners have skills that would be useful in a job) where mentors have not sorted the statements equally (from −3 to +2). Similarly, on Statement #31 (Actually, I don't think they care too much if they have to go back prison again. Its almost like a holiday. Some even seem to like it there), where values ranged from +4 to −2.

Comparison of Mentors' and Ex-Prisoners' Viewpoints

In the service user study (Chapter 14) all the 21 ex-prisoners' Q sorts were subjected to the computer-based factor analysis, PQ Method (Schmolck, 2002). The analysis resulted in three factors (F1–3) which constitute the average perspective of, respectively 8, 6 and 7 service users. The three resulting factors were interpreted and each group of exoffenders designated the titles of *The prison weary optimist* (F1), *The resilient optimist* (F2) and *The lonely, indigent and ill* (F3). As outlined in Chapter 14, a factor in a Q methodological study consists of 'persons' who have sorted the statements similarly, but not identically. The participants who 'constitute' a Q factor share the same average perspective.

In this study, the five mentors' Q sorts as presented in Table 15.1 and the three average Q sorts/perspectives of the ex-prisoners (F1–3) were subjected to the computer-based factor analysis. The analysis, which based on a total of eight 'participants', resulted in three new factors, presented as Factor 1, Factor 2 and Factor 3 in Table 15.2. In this table, F1, F2 and F3 refer to the three average perspectives of the ex-prisoners and M1−M5 refers to the mentors' Q sorts.

Table 15.2 show that the three original factors from the service user study, F1, F2 and F3 load, respectively, on the new Factor 1, Factor 2 and Factor 3. Strikingly, all the five mentors' Q sorts (M1−M5) load on Factor 3, and share perspectives with F3, which is the average perspective of seven service users, characterised as *The lonely, indigent and ill.* In this study, as in the service user study (Chapter 14) Factor 3 can be described as the most pessimistic perspective. In other words, mentors perspectives are most in tune with the pessimistic perspectives of the lonely, indigent

and ill group of exoffenders they work with. They do not share the optimistic views that characterise other groups of offenders in receipt of their service.

In addition to the above factor analysis, a qualitative comparison was conducted, based on visual inspection of a selection of six statements that represented statements where there was the most disagreement between service users and service providers. The selected statements and the corresponding results from the individual mentors' Q sorts (M1−M5) and ex-prisoners' average perspectives (F1–3) in the service user study is presented in Table 15.3. The left column of the table refers to number of the six selected statements (10, 12, 14, 18, 31 and 42). The next five columns marked M1−M5 refers to Mentor 1–5 and their individual score on each of the selected statements. The three right columns of the table, marked F1−F3, refers to Factor 1–3 in the service user study (the three average perspectives), and the score on each of the selected statements. Factors represent a weighted average of Q sorts performed by participants who sort the statements similarly.

Table 15.3 show the mentors' ranking (P1–5) and the ex-prison average rankings (F1–3) of six selected statements where there was clear differences between the mentors' and ex-prisoners' perspectives:

Statement #10: '*Most of them have someone who really cares about them, that they can call at any time, just to help them thinking*'.

This statement was given the negative score −3 by four out of five mentors (i.e. P1, P2, P3 and P4), while one mentor (P5) have given this statement the score +1. In other words, four mentors do not believe that most ex-prisoners have somebody who care for them, that they can call for help and support at any time. As such they are most in agreement with exoffenders from *the lonely, indigent and ill* (F3) group. Although even the F3 group are more optimistic on this statement than are most of their mentors (only one mentor (P5) agreed with F3 on this statement, both scoring +1). The mentor perspective has very little congruence with those of *The prison weary optimist* (F1) and *The resilient optimist* (F2) who were service users that both believe that positive supportive relationships were available to them (scoring, respectively +3 and +4). These differences in views may imply that mentors do not have sufficient insight in service users' network. Alternatively, service users may include

Table 15.3 Comparison of viewpoints: service providers' versus service users' viewpoints, based on, accordingly, single Q sorts and average perspectives on six selected statements

Comparison of viewpoints
Service providers/mentors (M1–M5) versus ex-prison service users (F1–F3)

Mentors 1–5					Statements from the	Average perspectives of service users, F1–3		
Statement number	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	service provider study/service user study	F1	F2	F3
10	−3	−3	−3	−3	1	Most of them have someone who really cares about them, that they can call at any time, just to help them thinking/I have someone who really cares about me, that I can call at any time, just to help me thinking	3	4	1

(continued)

Table 15.3 (continued)

Comparison of viewpoints
Service providers/mentors (M1–M5) versus ex-prison service users (F1–F3)

12	2	−2	−1	0	−3	Most of them have plenty of skills and knowledge that would be useful in a decent job/I have plenty of skills and knowledge that will be useful in a decent job	2	2	2
14	−3	−4	−3	−5	−4	After release, many would say that their life is actually getting very well, and that they are looking forward to the future/My life is actually getting very well, so I'm looking forward to the future now	5	5	−2

Comparison of viewpoints

Service providers/mentors (M1–M5) versus ex-prison service users (F1–F3)

No.	Statement	-1	0	-1	0	0	3	3	3
18	Most of them think that if they make serious decisions about starting a new life, no drugs and no crime, they are fully capable of doing it/If I make a serious decision to start a new life, without crime and drugs, I know that I am fully capable of doing it	-1	0	-1	0	0	3	3	3

(continued)

Table 15.3 (continued)

Comparison of viewpoints
Service providers/mentors (M1–M5) versus ex-prison service users (F1–F3)

	-2	1	0	-1	4	-5	-4	-5
31						Actually, I don't think they care too much if they have to go back to prison again. It's almost like a holiday. Some even seem to like it there/Actually, I don't care too much if I have to go to prison again. It's almost like a holiday. I kind of like it there		

Comparison of viewpoints
Service providers/mentors (M1–M5) versus ex-prison service users (F1–F3)

42	−5	−5	−4	−5	−5	−2	1	1
						Most of them are good at controlling their feelings and temper. They don't get carried away by frustrations and things like that/I am good at controlling my feelings and temper. I never get carried away by frustrations and things like that		

the mentor in their reflections here, seeing the mentor as the person that they can call at any time.

Statement #12: *the belief that service users have skills and knowledge that would be useful in a job.*

All three ex-prisoner types seemed confident of their employability in this regard (+2 across F1, F2 and F3). However, with the exception of Mentor 1 (+2), the Q sorts of mentors do not reflect this service user optimism (M2 −2, M3 −1, M4 0 and M5 −3) regarding their future employability.

Statement #14: *Their life is getting better and they look forward to the future.*

The prison weary optimist and *The resilient optimist* seem very confident about a brighter future (statement #14/both +5), while the mentors seem more pessimistic (ranked from −3 to −5).

Statement #18: *They are capable of starting a new life, free from crime and drugs if they make a serious decision about it.*

All three types of ex-prisoners groups felt that they were capable of starting a new life, free from crime and drugs if they made a serious decision about it (+3 across all ex-prisoner types). Mentors are again more pessimistic (ranked from −1 to 0).

Statement #31: *Actually, I don't think they care too much if they have to go back to prison again. It's almost like a holiday. Some even seem to like it there.*

All ex-prisoner types are adamant that they do not want to return to prison and had not found their time there easy (F1/−5, F2/−4, F3/−5). Mentors were less convinced and while generally believing that ex-prisoners were unlikely to want to return (M1/−2, M3/0, P5/+4) some mentors seemed convinced this was a possibility (M2/+1 and M5/+4).

Statement #42: *Most of them are good at controlling their feelings and temper. They don't get carried away by frustrations and things like that/*

According to the mentors', ex-prisoners have very poor abilities in controlling their feelings and that they easily get carried away by frustrations (Score given by M3 was −4 and the remaining mentors scored −5). In contrast, the ex-prisoners, especially The prison weary optimist

and The resilient optimist had at least some belief in their own capability of controlling feelings and temper (F1/−2, F2/+1 and F3/+1).

Discussion

Overall this small scale and exploratory study has shown that offenders believe their behaviour is under control, that they have a positive future, that they can stay off drugs, that they have the possibility of finding employment and that they are able to remain outside of prison. Mentors are less positive (less naive or more cynical, perhaps) on the likelihood of all of these being possible. Mentors may have developed these attitudes for a variety of reasons including their own experiences of previous clients and hence knowledge of the challenges facing these people. They may also hold an unconscious bias against offenders, regardless of their experiences, influenced by societal and media representatives of this group.

The impact of a mismatch in mentor-offender perspectives on the mentor service user relationship and self-efficacy.

The comparison of viewpoints presented in Table 15.2 indicates that service providers, with a few exceptions, have a rather poor belief in the service users' abilities, recourses and future hope, in contrast to the views of service users who are more optimistic. Mentors and ex-prison service users view their situation, needs and potential in different ways, and this mismatch is likely to have implications for the mentor-service user relationship and the service provision in the rehabilitation process (Larsen et al., 2019). Whichever group prove to be right, there will be challenges facing the ex-prisoner in their aim to get a new life, free from crime and drugs and they will need several forms of help and support. Difficult but not impossible (Sjo & Sæbjørnsen, 2018; Landheim, 2016) and the mentor may be key to an exoffenders self belief/efficacy that he has got what it takes to do so (Bandura, 1994). The ability of a mentor to act as this key will be severely compromised, if not damaging, if mentors themselves do not believe that such change is doable. All of the above strategies to enhance self-efficacy are likely to be compromised if the mentor is less than positive about an ex-prisoner's ability to succeed in

the first place. Poor professional expectations, as demonstrated in this study, may contribute to failures in rehabilitation programmes an eventually higher rates of recidivism (Graunbøl et al., 2010). Diminishing a person's perception of self-efficacy, may reduce his chances for change, by convincing him that he does not have what it takes (ibid.). This mentor's disbelief in the ex-prisoner's possibilities for change will permeate the mentor's attitude towards their work with the exoffender and they risk convincing the ex-prisoner that the targeted change is an unattainable goal. This could occur through the processes of exoffenders experiencing the stigmatisation of the ex-prisoner, that leads to antisocial behaviours entered into through the processes of a self-fulfilling prophesy (Rosenthal, 1994). For F3 ex-prisoners, their beliefs of the futility of their efforts are confirmed, and for F1 and F2 ex-prisoners their self belief may be eroded. If a 'recovery-oriented approach' is to work with these exprisoners (Sjo & Sæbjørnsen, 2018; Landheim, 2016), it is crucial that the mentor empower the service user and support their development of self-government (Slade, 2013). The basic in recovery-oriented practices is that the helper seeks to strengthen the service user's recourses, promote his personal responsibility, promote a positive identity and create hope. To achieve this, mentors need continually to examine their own stereotypes held of ex-prisoners, working against introducing bias into their interactions, and actively working towards promoting self-efficacy in their clients. The latter starts with the mentor expecting the best of and for them.

But why do mentors continue to mentor ex-prisoners, if they do not believe change is possible? It is possible that mentors get too occupied with meeting the acute, basic needs of the many service users, such as food and a bed for the night, and that they lack capacity to focus on the more long-term form of help, such as a lifestyle change. It may not only be the self-efficacy of the offender that is under threat here, but that of the mentor as well. Being in a constant fire fighting state, never able to effectively help ex-prisoners change in the long term, can do little to contribute to build mentors' self-efficacy. Whether it is the experiences of offenders failures or their own, if a mentor's belief in ex-prisoners' possibilities for change gradually weakens, mentors will be increasingly less able to help ex-prisoners break free from a trajectory characterised

by crime, drugs and re-imprisonment (ibid.). Constantly meeting acute needs, and in return, receiving gratitude from the ex-prisoner in need, may create a view of ex-prisoners as extremely pitiful, wretched and totally dependent on the service providers help. Such understanding will, at least, make it difficult to convince the ex-prisoner that he has got what it takes to stand independently and start a new life.

Fortunately, the situation is not quite as pessimistic as the chain of thoughts above might seem. There are differences in viewpoints also among the mentors in this example study, and there are many examples of ex-prisoners who have successfully changed their lifestyle through support from recovery-oriented helpers (Sjo & Sæbjørnsen, 2018; Landheim, 2016). It may be useful to remind mentors of significant success stories to create hope and belief, in service users as well as in service providers. It may also be useful to use the Q sort cards described here and in Chapter 14 as a tool for mentors to gain insight into the world of the exoffender during consultations. It may also be used as a crossing boundary tool for clients and mentors to work together and compare their own views and the reasons behind them, hence building a path for communication between them.

The impact of a mismatch in mentor-offender perspectives on service user involvement in social innovation.

The second question posed in this chapter was the advisability of service user engagement in social innovation.

Leading on from the concept of multivoicedness discussed in Hean et al. Chapter 1 and Fluttert et al. Chapter 11, professionals participating in developmental interventions such as the Change Laboratory model may be called on to represent the voice of the offender into the developmental workshops and discussions. This may be advocated because the vulnerability of the exoffenders themselves may be an issue if they were to participate in the workshops in person. However, our study suggests that although the professional may represent the ex-prisoners' voice to some extent (see the agreement on many of the Q sort statements), they are also less likely to dwell on the positives of the ex-prisoners' future and their potential, but instead be more realistic/cynical about their prospects. Ideally therefore it would be best for the voice of the ex-prisoner to be heard directly and that allowing the professional to

represent the service user is not ideal. If this is not possible, as will be determined by the individual intervention/context the intervention is being implemented in, then other means of presenting the view of the ex-prisoner, that does not solely rely on the interpretation of the service provider. Using the results of the ex-prisoners' Q sort of statements could be one way of achieving this, for example, using the cards and the sort as mirror material (see Hean et al., Chapter 8). Alternatively, interventions should acknowledge the bias being introduced by including the professional perspective alone.

Conclusion

This study is a small scale pilot study, comparing mentor and service user perspectives of ex-prisoner's future and successful reintegration and the tentative findings presented here must be trialed with larger population groups. However, the study suggests that, at least on a tentative basis, mentors have more pessimistic views of ex-prisoners prospects than the ex-prisoners themselves. This mismatch is likely to impact on the self-efficacy of the ex-prisoner. It also suggests that professionals are not best placed to represent the voice of the ex-prisoner in developmental interventions adequately. We recommend mentors examine their own perspectives of the ex-prisoner and work against any potential negative stereotypes they act upon unconsciously in their professional practice. Further, although we acknowledge the vulnerability of the ex-prisoner in the innovation process, we recommend that attempts be made to include the voice of the service user first hand into developmental work, creating a safe space into which this voice can be heard.

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