

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

F-36

Internal and External Factors Impacting Supervised Release Adjustment

Symposium Chair: Luck Subramanian, PhD
Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Evaluation Unit

Clients committed under the Wisconsin Sexually Violent Person law are placed on supervised release (SR) upon the Court's determination that they meet the statutory criteria, or as part of a stipulated agreement. Supervised release placement is preceded by community notification. This symposium examines the community reentry experiences of SR clients from a systems perspective and seeks to understand SR adjustment as a function of external/situational factors (e.g., housing, employment, social support), including client perspective on community notification. Successful SR adjustment is defined as the client's ability to adhere to supervised release rules; repeated or serious rule violations leading to SR revocation or any arrest/charge/conviction would constitute poor adjustment. Secondly, we examine the role of internal factors in enhancing or thwarting SR adjustment by drawing on the components of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and time perspective. As a third component, we present outcome data in the form of SR violations and charges accrued while on SR, and assess if situational factors and internal factors contribute to supervised release adjustment incrementally after accounting for static or actuarial risk, as measured by the Static-99R score. This symposium will also compare adjustment (i.e., custody events for technical violations or charges) of clients under SR to their adjustment following unconditional discharge. Adaptation under these two distinct release environments is presented to highlight implications for risk management.

External Protective Factors Related to Supervised Release Adjustment

Rachel E. Kahn, PhD
Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

For individuals who have sexually offended, transitioning to the community is typically viewed through the lens of a systems perspective. That is, external or situational factors such as housing (including residency restriction), employment, and social support are seen as key determinants of successful adjustment to the community. Prior research in a general offending population has found that age, sustained full-time employment, and social support influence successful supervision of parolees (Bahr, Harris, Fisher, & Armstrong, 2010), and these may be relevant protective factors to consider for individuals who commit sexual offenses (de Vries Robbe, Mann, Maruna, & Thornton, 2015). However,

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

individuals who have committed sexual offenses face more stringent challenges because of their sex offender status. Constraints such as zoning or residential restrictions or community notification hinder housing accommodation, employment, and social support (e.g., Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Levenson, D'Amora, & Hern, 2007; Mercado, Alvarez, & Levenson, 2008; Tewksbury & Lees, 2006). To date; however, little research has examined adjustment of individuals placed on a supervised release committed under an SVP law. This paper explores how external/situational protective factors influence successful transition into the community for individuals placed under supervised release in Wisconsin.

This presentation will include data from a high-risk sample of individuals who were civilly committed to the Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center as “Sexually Violent Persons” (SVPs) and subsequently given supervised release. Participants completed a semi-structured interview that addressed factors such as housing accommodations, employment, monitors and treatment team, social support, and community notification. Associations between external protective factors and success on supervised release will be examined. Details surrounding the SR placement process in Wisconsin will also be provided.

Learning Goals:

After attending this presentation, audience members will be able to:

- Describe external protective factors that affect successful adjustment on supervised release placements.
- Summarize supervised release client perspectives of community notification.
- Describe the barriers to community adjustment for a supervised release population.

Internal Factors Impacting Supervised Release Adjustment

Luck Subramanian, PhD
Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

Whereas systems perspective provides a sound theoretical model to discuss behaviors within the context of enriching or limited environments, an alternative perspective is to examine client behavior as a function of an internal, decision-making process as proposed by the Theory of Planned Behavior. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a theoretical framework to understand, predict, and change behavior (Ajzen, 1985; Ajzen, 2012). TPB is derived from the model of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972), an influential theory in social psychology. TRA/TPB has been applied to explain dishonest/immoral behaviors (cheating, lying, and shoplifting), eating behaviors, and alcohol use (Ajzen & Sheikh, 2013; Beck & Ajzen, 1991; Vallerand et al., 1992). TPB reviews behaviors as conscious decisions but acknowledges that repeated engagement in the behavior lends it an automatic flair. TPB involves the interplay of the

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

following components: attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, and intention. This presentation seeks to understand rule violations or good adjustment under supervised release using the constructs of the TPB.

Another noteworthy factor to consider is time perspective. Time perspective “is the often nonconscious process whereby the continuous flow of personal and social experiences are assigned to temporal categories, or time frames, that help to give order, coherence, and meaning to those events” and which, over time, becomes akin to a dispositional style (Zimbardo and Boyd, 1999). Frequently, the developmental period of many individuals who are committed under Wisconsin’s SVP law is fraught with chaos, abuse, poor educational opportunity, and poor economic stability. According to the theory of time perspective, such individuals find it difficult to foresee the future or engage in any future focused planning while living in a randomly shifting present which seems out of their control. They therefore hold close what they have in the present. These individuals are stuck in a present orientation while living in a society that is largely future-oriented. This presentation assesses if those endorsing a stronger future perspective are more likely to succeed on SR and if social exclusion moderates the relationship between time perspective and SR adjustment.

Learning Goals:

After attending this presentation, audience members will be able to:

- Describe the Theory of Planned Behavior and understand how it can be applied to supervised release settings.
- Understand the three time perspectives and its application in a forensic setting.
- Describe potential interventions for enhancing supervised release adjustment based on the Theory of Planned Behavior and time perspectives.

Recidivism by Sexually Violent Persons under Supervised Release and Unconditional Discharge

Gina Ambroziak, BS
Rachel E. Kahn, PhD
Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

Lower recidivism rates have been found for individuals with a history of sexual offending released to supervision compared to those released to no supervision (e.g., Boccaccini, Murrie, Caperton, & Hawes, 2009; Duwe & Freske, 2012). Wisconsin’s Sexually Violent Persons (SVP) program has placed about a third of its client population on supervised release (SR) in the community. The SR program provides supervision, monitoring, and sexual offender treatment and is especially intensive for the first year of release. This presentation will examine outcomes, including sexual recidivism rates, for SVPs placed on SR since the program’s inception. The frequencies of various violation

SHAPING THE FUTURE

2019 ATSA Conference | Friday November 8 | 3:30 PM – 5:00 PM

types that result in custody events will be reported, along with survival analysis taking into account time at risk and factors that predict custody events. About a third of those with a placement on SR have subsequently been unconditionally discharged. The sexual recidivism rate under SR will be compared to that observed for the subset of individuals unconditionally discharged following an SR placement. Implications for risk management will be discussed.

Learning Goals:

After attending this presentation, audience members will be able to:

- Describe the rate of sexual recidivism for individuals on supervised release under Wisconsin's Sexually Violent Persons (SVP) statute.
- Understand the most common violations that lead to custody events for Wisconsin's SVPs under supervised release.
- Describe the rate of sexual recidivism for Wisconsin's SVPs unconditionally discharged following a supervised release placement, and understand the risk management implications suggested by the rates observed under these two release environments.

Dr. Luck Subramanian is the director of the Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Evaluation Unit (SRSTC-EU), Madison, Wisconsin. The SRSTC-EU is responsible for completing the Wisconsin SVP precommitment examinations to determine if an individual meets criteria for commitment under the SVP law, and annual SVP examinations to determine if the individuals meet criteria for supervised release or discharge.

Dr. Rachel Kahn is employed as a psychological associate with the Research Unit of Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center in Madison, WI. She received her Doctoral degree in Applied Developmental Psychology with specializations in developmental psychopathology and forensic psychology. She has authored numerous publications primarily related to the development and expression of psychopathic traits in adolescents and adults. Her most recent work has focused on adverse childhood experiences among those who sexually offend, biases in risk determinations for civil commitment evaluations, and using electroencephalogram (EEG) to help accurately identify treatment needs in sex offender populations.

Gina Ambroziak has worked for Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center, Wisconsin's sex offender civil commitment program, for over ten years. She is currently the Quality Improvement and Research Supervisor and held previous positions with the program as a Research Analyst and Treatment Specialist. She has been involved in research related to risk assessment practices of forensic evaluators, individuals with a history of sexual offending and major mental illness, and nutrition and mental health. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in psychology and legal studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.