The Mental Health and Well-being of Canadian Federal Parole Officers:

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION

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Executive Summary

Parole officers occupy a central role in the criminal justice system. Tasked with the rehabilitation and supervision of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, parole officer work contributes to both the reintegration of the individual and public safety. In Canada, there are over 1,600 parole officers (POs) employed in the federal prison system by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), working either in prison institutions or in the community. Existing research on POs is rich and varied, and has explored a range of theoretical and empirical issues related to parole work, from POs' conception of self as actors of supervision and treatment (e.g., Werth, 2013) to mental health and occupational stressors and risks and vulnerabilities associated with parole work (e.g., McGowan et al., 2016). Much of this research has been conducted in the United States and United Kingdom and other national contexts, while parole work in Canada has received comparatively little attention, especially when compared to research on incarceration and correctional officers. There is a need to produce Canadian-based empirical studies on the occupational realities of POs, including the organizational and operational challenges POs face, how they think about their job and seek to work with (former) prisoners, and what shapes their perceptions and experiences on the job. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic also poses acute challenges for POs who have had to make adjustments to their everyday work, responsibilities, and contact with clients in response to pandemic-related restrictions. These realities demand scholarly attention and ongoing work to create evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving the working conditions for POs and building a compassionate and resilient parole system during the pandemic and beyond.

In this report, we present findings based on interviews with 150 CSC employed POs across Canada. Specifically, we focus on five core themes that emerged as salient across interviewees' narratives:

a) *Workload and job tasks*

b) *Job satisfaction*

c) *Organizational climate and culture*

d) *Health and well-being*

e) *Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic*

We conclude the report with a set of recommendations that aim to address POs' accounts of organizational stressors and challenges; improve health and well-being; enhance job satisfaction; and build a parole system well equipped for dealing with future public health crises.

Throughout the report, we centre the voices and experiences of POs working in prison institutions and the community. Findings from this study draw attention to the positive and rewarding aspects of parole work (e.g., working one-on-one with clients), while also providing insight into the emotionally demanding and challenging nature of parole work. Our findings demonstrate how organizational challenges can impact POs' physical and mental wellness. While the COVID-19 pandemic is an exceptional event, it provides an opportunity to reflect on how parole work could be organized differently, to the benefit of POs and those under correctional supervision. As such, we make recommendations toward supporting POs during these unprecedented times. We also highlight the importance of better coordinating broad policy directives (e.g., calls for decarceration) and aligning these with POs' occupational realities.

Introduction

There are over 1,600 parole officers (POs) employed in Canada's federal prison system by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). POs work either as Institutional Parole Officers (IPOs) in correctional institutions or in the community as Community Parole Officers (CPOs). POs are responsible for preparing prisoners for release into the community and/or supervising and assisting former prisoners living in the community; as such, they play a significant role in the potential rehabilitation and desistance of individuals under correctional supervision (USJE, 2019). Canadian-based research on parole has considered POs' perceptions of parolees' immediate post-release needs (Brown, 2004); how Parole Boards produce gendered constructions of women's criminogenic risks and needs (Hannah-Moffat, 2004; Hannah-Moffat & Innocente, 2013; Hannah-Moffat & Yule, 2011); and the impact of an initiative in which police officers partnered with CSC parole offices to manage parolees considered to be "high risk" (Axford & Ruddell, 2010). In addition, various studies have examined more broadly how former prisoners experience the transition from prison to community, and the role of parole and community supports in supporting reintegration (e.g., Maier, 2020; McKendy & Ricciardelli, 2020). Yet, absent in the research on parole in Canada is a consideration of POs' occupational experiences and health. Studies on POs' occupational realities, health, and well-being have been conducted in the United States (U.S.) predominately, but also Australia, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom (U.K.), while research on POs' experiences in Canada is absent. To address this gap, we investigated IPOs' and CPOs' understandings of occupational stress and trauma, their mental health and well-being needs, and their access to and experience using mental health resources. Results from this project will advance the scholarly knowledge on an understudied sub-population of public safety personnel and provide evidence-based recommendations for meeting the mental health needs of Canadian public safety POs.

A recent survey (commissioned by the USJE) found that POs face a range of occupational challenges, many of which have been exacerbated by budgetary and policy shifts in recent years. These challenges include heightened risk of burnout due to increased workloads, a lack of support and resources required to effectively perform the job, and an organizational "culture of fear" and harassment in CSC, all of which contribute to mental health challenges for POs (USJE, 2019). The nature of their job exposes both IPOs and CPOs to a variety of potential stresses and potentially psychologically traumatic events

(PPTEs); however little academic research has been conducted about the exact experiences of IPOs and CPOs, including how they are exposed to PPTE and the forms in which PPTE manifests.

Given the paucity of Canadian research in the area, the Union of Safety and Justice Employees' (USJE's) 2019 report *Protecting Public Safety: The Challenges Facing Federal Parole Officers in Canada's Highly Stressed Criminal Justice System* provides important context to understanding the experiences of POs in Canada. The report found that POs experience a variety of pressures, including large caseloads, high-need clients, a lack of resources, policy changes, administrative demands (e.g., paperwork), and increased occupational demands—all of which they perceive to be negatively affecting their ability to effectively supervise their clients. These occupational experiences are causing federal POs to feel anxious, stressed, and burnt out (USJE, 2019).

The 2019 USJE report highlights the need for further and ongoing research on POs' occupational experiences, stress, and well-being. In the current report, we outline major findings based on semi-structured interviews with POs (n=150) across Canada.

The report is structured as follows: We provide an overview of the literature on POs' occupational experiences. Next, we outline our methods and data. The empirical sections of this report focus on five core themes: (1) Workload and job tasks; (2) Job satisfaction; (3) Organizational climate and culture; (4) Health and wellbeing; and (5) Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The report concludes with a set of recommendations pertaining to each of these themes.

Parole Officers and Occupational Health: A Review of the Literature

In this section, we review the literature on probation officers' and POs' occupational experiences. Although probation and parole are distinct processes, in the current literature review, we consider research on both parole and probation officers (PPOs) for three reasons. First, both roles are similar in that they often involve the community supervision of people convicted of crimes. Second, in some jurisdictions/countries, officers may work both probation and parole cases (e.g., DeMichelle & Payne, 2007; Gayman & Bradley, 2013). Third, many studies (e.g., DeMichelle & Payne, 2007; Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Getahun et al., 2008; Holgate & Clegg, 1991; Rhineberger-Dunn et al., 2016) consider PPOs together under the category of "community correctional" workers. In reviewing the literature, we therefore use "PPO", except where we discuss a study specifically focused on one of parole or probation. Researchers looking at PPOs' occupational stress and mental health needs are few, particularly in comparison to other corrections employees (Pitts, 2007; Slate et al., 2003; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). To this end, following a brief overview of burnout among PPOs, we report on two broad themes in the literature: 1) occupational stress and 2) organizational factors. We conclude the review by discussing key gaps in the literature.

BURNOUT

We typically understand occupational stress to be a condition that occurs when the perceived pressure arising directly from one's job conditions exceeds one's perceived coping ability (Pitts, 2007). Specifically, occupational stress arises from "demands experienced in the working environment that affect how one functions at work or outside work" (McGowan et al., 2006, p. 92). Relatedly, organizational factors that contribute to stress are a product of "the culture and management style adopted within an organization" (Cooper et al., 2001, p. 47). Collectively, occupational and organizational stresses among PPOs may contribute to burnout, referring to the "psychological strain that afflicts those working in the human service professions, including health care, social work, and law enforcement" (McCarty & Skogan, 2012, p. 69).

Recognizing burnout may manifest differently across cultural or occupational settings, Maslach (2003) identified three universal components of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism (i.e., the development of negative views towards one's job and/or coworkers), and inefficacy (i.e., the development of negative views toward one's own performance). Further, the risk of burnout heightens where there are major mismatches between the nature of the job and the nature of people…in six

different areas: work overload, lack of control, insufficient rewards, breakdown of workplace community, absence of fairness, and value conflict (Maslach, 2003, xxii).

Numerous studies (Gayman & Bradley, 2013; Holgate & Clegg, 1991; Lewis et al., 2013; White et al., 2005; Whitehead, 1985, 1987; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985) identify burnout as an occupational risk for PPOs, arising from both occupational and/or organizational factors that create such mismatches. In the following sections, we review the literature in both of these areas.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Researchers reveal that PPOs can experience high levels of occupational stress (Simmons et al., 1997; White et al., 2005; Whitehead, 1987; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985), with work overload, role conflict or role ambiguity, and client contact highlighted as the most challenging occupational stressors for PPOs.

Role overload is a concept that describes a worker's "inability to fulfil organizational expectations (assigned tasks) in the time available" (Beehr & Glazer, 2005, p. 13). Role overload, whether or not explicitly identified as such in the literature, scholars find to be a significant source of stress or job dissatisfaction for PPOs. Specifically, the size of officers' caseloads and the volume of paperwork they must complete are the most commonly identified causes of role overload (DeMichelle & Payne, 2007; Farrow, 2004; Finn & Kuck, 2005; Simmons et al. 1997; Slate et al., 2003; Thomas, 1988; West & Seiter, 2004; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). Along with unanticipated deadlines that are beyond the control of the officer, Finn and Kuck (2005) describe these as the "'big three' sources of stress" for PPOs (p. 2).

Some researchers (DeMichelle & Payne, 2007; Gayman & Bradley, 2013; West & Seider, 2004; White et al., 2005) indicate that PPOs may feel that competing demands of the job are irreconcilable—what is known as *role conflict* (Beehr & Glazer, 2005). DeMichelle and Payne (2007) surveyed U.S.-based PPOs (n=228), finding that respondents developed role conflict because they perceived their organizations to be pursuing conflicting punitive and rehabilitative goals. The sentiment was also expressed by participants in West and Seiter's (2004) study of PPOs (n=142) in the U.S. states of Missouri and Kentucky, where they highlighted feelings of tension between PPOs' public safety (surveillance activities) and rehabilitation (casework activities) obligations. The article's title, "Social Worker or Cop?," summarizes the nature of this role conflict for PPOs (West & Seiter, 2004). Gayman and Bradley (2013), in a study of PPOs in North Carolina, US (n=893), summarized the competing demands faced by many PPOs that can lead to role conflict:

> Community corrections officers are charged with monitoring offenders' behavior to enforce the conditions of

> supervision and detect lawbreaking, while assisting offenders to successfully integrate into their communities, maintain employment, complete substance abuse or other treatment, and avoid recidivism. To accomplish these goals requires that officers assume multiple roles, balancing the best interests of the offenders with those of the criminal justice system (p. 328).

As the excerpt indicates, PPOs are expected to perform a variety of duties in pursuit of both public safety and offender rehabilitation goals. The role conflict that can arise from these occupational demands can contribute to occupational stress and burnout among PPOs (Holgate & Clegg, 1991; White et al., 2005; Whitehead, 1987; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985).

Lastly, the researchers demonstrate that PPO's occupational stresses can arise from *client contact*, that is, through interactions with the offenders under their supervision (Gayman et al., 2018; Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). In Whitehead and Lindquist's (1985) study of PPOs in Alabama, U.S. (n=108), 42% of participants cited client contact as a stressor; however, the authors only mentioned one specific client contact stressor, which was the collection of fees from supervisees. Meanwhile, in a recent study (Gayman et al., 2018) of PPOs in North Carolina, U.S. (n=893) the researchers found that "having more people with mental health problems on one's caseload is associated with significantly more depressive symptoms" (p. 523). Gayman et al.'s (2018) finding indicates that handling a caseload that includes many people with mental health needs may be a further source of client contact stress for PPOs. Other scholars (Finn & Kuck, 2005; Lewis et al.; Pitts, 2007) have noted that some PPOs in the U.S. are concerned about the possibility of client violence, creating a concern for personal safety that contributes to officer stress.

Stress or other strong emotional reactions from client contact may also arise as a result of PPOs' close contact with offenders, particularly those who have committed offenses culturally and socially interpreted as disturbing, such as sex crimes, which risks exposing them to "secondary" or "vicarious" trauma (Catanese, 2010; Goldhill, 2019; Lewis et al., 2013; Morran, 2008; Rhineberger-Dunn et al., 2016; Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013). Secondary trauma is defined as "the emotional, cognitive, and physical consequences of providing professional services to victims or perpetrators of trauma" (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013, p. 7). Rhineberger-Dunn et al. (2016), in a study of PPOs (n=179) in Iowa, U.S., found a relationship between hours of client contact and reporting of secondary trauma, suggesting that repeated exposure to details of a client's offence can increase the likelihood of experiencing vicarious trauma.

Two studies provide detailed insights into experiences of secondary trauma among PPOs. First, Lewis et al. (2013), in a study of

probation workers (N=309) in three U.S. states (Arizona, California, Texas), highlighted four major traumatic events their participants were exposed to through the actions of their clients: suicide (reported by 38% of participants), "violent recidivism involving a child" (reported by 32% of participants), "sexual recidivism" (reported by 23% of participants), and "violent recidivism resulting in death to a victim" (reported by 12% of participants) (pp. 74-75). The effects of the secondary trauma were seen in "significantly higher scores in the areas of burnout, mistrust, sexual issues, family problems, anger, distorted world-view, social/emotional isolation, and over-responsibility" among participants (Lewis et al., 2013 p. 78).

Second, Severson and Pettus-Davis' (2013) investigated the experiences of POs (n=49) who supervise sex offenders in an unnamed U.S. state, and found that their participants showed symptoms of secondary traumas. POs described feeling high levels of stress arising from supervising sex offenders, fears that they were being manipulated or "groomed" by their clients, and a heightened sense of supervisor responsibility due to the nature of the crimes committed by the supervisees. These experiences contributed to physical (e.g., feeling sick) and emotional responses, and had negative impacts on POs' personal lives, such as feelings of hyper-vigilance or difficulty with physical intimacy (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013). The POs in Severson and Pettus-Davis' (2013) study did not have many effective coping strategies, mostly relying on avoiding or downplaying the trauma they faced, and felt they received little support from their departments to deal with the traumatic aspects of their work.

The role of secondary trauma is significant for understanding PPOs' experiences, particularly when contextualized within the broader research on public safety personnel (PSP). Examining qualitative survey responses among a sample of Canadian PSP (n=284), Ricciardelli et al. (2020) found that a hierarchy exists among PSP in which "suffering is considered most legitimate if the exposure to trauma is direct, rather than indirect or cumulative" (p. 5). The finding suggests that PPOs' experiences of secondary trauma may not be taken as seriously as that of other PSP who are directly exposed to traumatic events. Given that just two studies (Lewis et al., 2013; Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013) deeply examine PPOs' experiences of secondary trauma, the area deserves much greater investigation.

Given the diverse forms of occupational stress PPOs experience, some researchers have attempted to determine contributing factors to higher or lower levels of stress. Studies on the relationship between PPOs' job experience and stress levels have produced mixed findings. Whereas some researchers found that more senior PPOs experience higher symptoms of stress (Lee et al., 2009; Lewis et al., 2013; Slate et al., 2003), others (Patterson, 1992; Thomas, 1988; Whitehead 1985) found a

curvilinear relationship, in which new and experienced PPOs had the lowest levels of stress while mid-career officers experienced the highest levels of stress. Another perspective (Holgate & Clegg, 1991), based on a study of probation officers in the Australian state of Victoria, found similar levels of stress between "younger" (aged 18-35; n=55) and "older" (aged 36-58; n=51) workers. Other researchers have considered the importance of education or training on PPOs' likelihood of experiencing stress. For instance, Pitts' (2007) investigated PPOs (n=3,114) across the U.S., finding that nearly 30% of respondents "felt under-prepared educationally" (p. 70) for their jobs. The subgroup who felt underprepared also experienced higher levels of stress than the remainder of the sample. Moreover, Rhineberger-Dunn and colleagues (2016) found that PPOs in Iowa, U.S. were less likely to experience secondary trauma if they felt adequately trained for their job.

Finally, some scholars do provide a contrasting view to client contact as an inevitable source of stress. In Whitehead's (1987) study of probation officers and managers in New York, US (n=556), he found that client contact was associated with more regular feelings of job accomplishment, rather than a significant source of stress. Meanwhile, Vogelvang et al. (2014) did research in the Netherlands, finding that for workers in the Dutch Probation Service (n=162), including probation officers, "the problem is not the client… Working with difficult people is something they have clearly chosen for" (p. 139). Similarly, although probation officers working with domestic violence perpetrators in Morran's (2008) U.K.-based study (n=16) faced challenges from exposure to potentially traumatic client experiences, they also expressed a sense of satisfaction at doing meaningful work. These studies offer an important counterpoint by highlighting that, for at least some PPOs, working with clients is a valued part of their job whose positives may outweigh the negatives. Nonetheless, as our review of literature on this topic makes clear, various aspects of client contact can certainly cause stress or secondary trauma for PPOs.

ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

In the majority of PPO literature, researchers focus on occupational stresses, which arise from the very nature of the job. However, various studies touch upon *organizational factors* that contribute to PPOs' stress, mental health problems, or job dissatisfaction. Specific organizational stressors researchers associate with PPOs include: inadequate training (DeMichele & Payne, 2007; Pitts, 2007), staff shortages or lack of administrative support (Farrow, 2004; Simmonds et al., 1997), and a perception that PPOs' work is undervalued in the organization (Farrow, 2004; Morran, 2008). In addition, researchers highlight additional organizational stressors, such as: level of salary/benefits and lack of opportunities for promotion (Simmons et al., 1997; Slate et al., 2003; Thomas, 1988), concerns about supervisors (Whitehead &

Lindquist, 1985), lack of funding and/or resources (DeMichele & Payne, 2007; Pitts, 2007; Vogelvang et al., 2014), and a belief that policymakers do not understand the reality of PPOs' work (Farrow, 2004). Researchers have found female PPOs experience stress at greater levels than their male counterparts (Simmons et al. 1997; Slate et al. 2003). For instance, Slate et al. (2003) suggest the greater stress experience by female PPOs is due to "the male-dominated work environment that often permeates criminal justice organizations [that] can breed an atmosphere conducive to the promulgation of gender and sexual harassment" (p. 534). However, the veracity of Slate and colleagues (2003) explanation is not explored further in the PPO literature.

Given the potentially detrimental impact of organizational stressors on PPOs, a number of researchers propose the adoption of *participatory management* as a potential remedy (Holgate & Clegg, 1991; Lee, et al., 2009; Simmons et al., 1997; Slate et al., 2003; Whitehead & Lindquist, 1985). Participatory management is, broadly defined, the inclusion of employees alongside managers in organizational decision-making (Lee at al., 2009). Supporting a managerial approach, Lee et al. (2009) found that, within a sample of probation officers (n=191) in three U.S. states (Kansas, Missouri, and Texas), a "participatory climate" in the workplace reduced participants' stress and increased their job satisfaction. Similarly, of Slate et al.'s (2003) sample of 636 probation officers in an unnamed U.S. state, officers who did not believe they had input into the organizational decisions affecting their job were more likely to be stressed and view their work negatively. Although not invoking the concept of participatory management, Vogelvang et al. (2014) similarly highlight the importance of a supportive and empowering organizational climate on the resilience of Dutch probation staff. In sum, their findings offer insights into potential solutions to organizational factors that negatively affect the work of PPOs.

GAPS AND LIMITATIONS IN THE LITERATURE

Limited research on the occupational experiences of PPOs: The existing literature provides limited insight into the occupational experiences of PPOs. While highlighting key stressors and challenges, the literature offers only a handful of studies that provide a deep, fine-grained exploration of these occupational realities. Given the necessary public safety role that PPOs play in correctional systems, and the unique challenges associated with the job, there is clear need for further research on the specific population. Furthermore, future researchers should attend more closely to similarities and differences between PPOs working in institutional versus community contexts—an important distinction in the context of Canadian federal POs.

Limited geographic focus: The vast majority of research on PPOs is from the U.S., with a smaller number of studies focusing on Australia, the Netherlands, or the U.K. While there is clear value in examining common themes in parole and probation work across different locations, there is also a need for jurisdiction-specific research that pays close attention to local specificities. As the USJE's (2019) report makes clear, Canadian POs face many occupational and organizational challenges in their work; yet, researchers have yet to explore said challenges empirically. Such a lacuna in knowledge highlights a clear need, therefore, for deeper research into the occupational experiences and stresses of Canadian POs.

Methodology

In the current study, we used qualitative methods of data collection and analysis to understand the experiences, challenges, and long-term effects of parole work. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Board at Memorial University of Newfoundland (#20201495) and a copy of the ethics approval can be found in Appendix 1. Research assistants signed nondisclosure agreements stating that they would keep all information collected during this study confidential and would not transmit this information outside the research team.

Recruitment was conducted with the assistance of USJE and CSC, both of which sent study information in English and French to POs via internal listservs. Further, several participants explained that they had, of their own initiative, assisted with recruitment through word-of-mouth or social media recommendations to their colleagues. Thus, our recruitment efforts were aided by this informal snowball sampling. In total, we interviewed 150 participants for the study.

We used a semi-structured approach to interviews, which is a qualitative method that permits participants to guide the conversation and share experiences or identify issues that they feel are most relevant, while enabling the researcher to follow-up for clarification or elaboration (Brinkmann, 2020). In practice, this method meant that we came prepared with broad interview questions, but let the participant guide the discussion toward topics they felt were most relevant.

Most interviews lasted between 75-120 minutes. Interviews were conducted in August and September, 2020. Due to geographic limitations and COVID-19 restrictions, we conducted all interviews over the telephone. Although face-to-face interviews are predominant in qualitative research, there is evidence that telephone interviews do not inhibit rapport-building and may permit participants to discuss sensitive topics with greater comfort (Mealer & Jones, 2014; Novick, 2008). The latter advantage of telephone interviews was particularly salient, given that participants regularly discussed difficult or potentially psychologically traumatic occupational experiences.

Most (n=145) interviews were conducted in English. We also arranged two French-language group interviews with the assistance of USJE, which were live-translated by professional translators and lasted two hours each. A total of five POs participated in these group interviews: two in the first session and three in the second session.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by research assistants for the purposes of data analysis. Transcripts were coded in an open-ended fashion to determine emergent themes. In practice, this means that three members of the research team independently and sequentially coded five transcripts to develop an initial set of codes. This process ensured inter-rater reliability, that is, consistency in coding between the research team, which is an important feature of robust qualitative research. The remaining transcripts were then coded individually by members of the research team, allowing the initial codes to be refined and new codes to be created as they emerged.

Our approach to data analysis followed a semi-grounded constructed approach (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Ricciardelli et al., 2010), which means that we allowed our thematic findings to emerge from the data (that is, the words of participants) without preemptively imposing theoretical interpretation; yet, that we were nonetheless guided in our analysis by our scholarly and theoretical backgrounds. Transcripts were analyzed with the assistance of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software, which facilitated coding data into primary, secondary, and tertiary themes.

Participant Information

Of the 150 participants who took part in the study, 114 participants (76.0%) identified as female, 33 (22.0%) identified as male, and three (n=2.0%) did not provide their gender (see Table 1). Most participants (n=106; 70.7%) were between the ages 35-54 (see Table 2). The majority of participants identified their race as white (n=128; 85.3%), with Black (n=4; 2.7%), Chinese (n=4; 2.7%), and South Asian (n=4; 2.7%) as the next most frequent identifications (see Table 3). Nearly all POs (n=146; 97.3%) had completed a university degree or done at least some postgraduate work (see Table 4), which is not surprising given a degree is now a job requirement.

Table 1 – Participants' Gender

Gender	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Female	114	76.0%
Male	33	22.0%
No answer	3	2.0%

Table 2 – Participants' Ages

Age	No. of Participants	% of Participants
19-24	3	2.0%
25-34	21	14.0%
35-44	64	42.7%
45-54	42	28.0%
55-64	15	10.0%
65+	2	1.3%
No answer	3	2.0%

Table 3 – Participants' Racial Identification

Race	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Aboriginal/Indigenous	2	1.4%
Afro-Caribbean-Canadian	1	0.7%
Black	4	2.7%
Canadian	1	0.7%
Chinese	4	2.7%
Korean	1	0.7%
Latin American	1	0.7%
South Asian	4	2.7%
White	128	85.3%
Other	1	0.7%
No answer	3	2.0%

Table 4 – Participants' Level of Educational Attainment

Education Level	No. of Participants	% of Participants
College Graduate	1	0.7%
Post graduate degree	14	9.3%
Some High School/Some College	1	0.7%
Some Post Graduate Work	5	3.3%
University Graduate	127	84.7%
No answer	2	1.3%

Of the 150 participants, 96 (64.0%) worked in correctional institutions and 54 (36.0%) in community settings. While all participants responded to recruitment materials aimed at POs, some participants (n=9; 6.0%) were working in non-PO temporary or permanent roles at the time of the interview (see Table 5). In these instances, participants reflected on their PO tenures in the interviews and are counted as IPOs or CPOs depending on their experience. Exactly half of participants (n=75; 50.0%) had worked for CSC for between 10-19 years, while 36 (24.0%) had worked for CSC for less than a decade and 36 (24.0%) for more than 20 years (see Table 6).

Participants' worked in all provinces/territories, with the exception of employment of Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island (see Table 7). The most frequent province/territory of employment was Ontario (n=45; 30.0%), followed by British Columbia (n=38; 25.3%) and Manitoba (12.0%). All five CSC regions were represented in the sample (see Table 8): Ontario (n=46; 30.7%), Prairies (n=43; 28.7%), Pacific (n=39; 26.0%), Quebec (16; 10.7%), and Atlantic (n=6; 4.0%).

Nearly one-third of participants (n=47; 31.3%) had prior experience in CSC, either as a correctional officer (CX) or working at National or a Regional Headquarters. Other areas in which participants had prior public safety experience included police services (n=12; 8.0%), provincial probation/parole (n=8; 5.3%), provincial correctional officer (n=3; 2.0%), and the armed forces (n=3; 2.0%). Other participants (n=9; 6.0%) had experience in diverse public safety areas such as Canada Border Services Agency or Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

Table 5 – Job Role at Time of Interview[1]

Job Role	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Parole Officer	140	93.3%
Manager	5	3.3%
Coordinator	2	1.3%
Other Role in CSC	2	1.3%

Table 6 – Years of CSC Experience

Years of CSC Experience	No. of Participants	% of Participants
0 to 4	18	12.0%
5 to 9	18	12.0%
10 to 14	53	35.3%
15 to 19	22	14.7%
20 to 24	25	16.7%
25+	11	7.3%
No answer	3	2.0%

[1] To maintain the confidentiality of participants, we have generalized the roles identified by participants.

Table 7 – Province/Territory of Employment

Province/Territory	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Alberta	17	11.3%
British Columbia	38	25.3%
Manitoba	18	12.0%
New Brunswick	2	1.3%
Nova Scotia	4	2.7%
Northwest Territories	2	1.3%
Nunavut	1	0.7%
Ontario	45	30.0%
Quebec	16	10.7%
Saskatchewan	6	4.0%
Yukon	1	0.7%

Table 8 – CSA Region of Employment

CSC Region	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Atlantic	6	4.0%
Pacific	39	26.0%
Prairie	43	28.7%
Ontario	46	30.7%
Quebec	16	10.7%

Table 9 – Previous Public Safety Experience

Public Safety Role	No. of Participants	% of Participants
Correctional Officer (CSC)	32	21.3%
Correctional Officer (provincial systems)	3	2.0%
CSC Regional or National Headquarters	15	10.0%
Military	3	2.0%
Police	12	8.0%
Probation/parole (provincial systems)	8	5.3%
Other	9	6.0%

Organizational Stressors: Workload and Job Tasks

Participants identified numerous organizational stressors that, collectively, create strain for many POs. Participants feel overwhelmed by their workloads: feeling "overworked" (P130), "running on a treadmill" (P50), and "like I'm sinking" (P5). POs explained that feeling overwhelmed in the face of relentless job demands affected their ability to perform their duties to the degree of quality they expected: "[a high workload] definitely lessens the quality of the work that we do when we don't have enough time" (P140). In this section, we discuss five organizational stressors related to workload and job tasks: amount of client supervision, deadlines and time management, paperwork and other administrative tasks, staffing, and being a "catch-all" both for clients' needs and for the broader case management team.

AMOUNT OF CLIENT SUPERVISION

The time IPO and CPOs devote to client interaction is measured differently.[2] IPOs manage a caseload of prisoners, which can vary in size but generally was described as around 25-30 clients. Some IPOs noted that, in exceptionally busy times, they have had caseloads as high as 35—a situation described as creating "extra stress from that workload" (P1). CPOs, meanwhile, are required to engage with parolees for a specified number of hours each month—what is called frequency of contact (FOC): "Some guys you see four times a month, and once and a while we'll get an intensive supervision case like eight times a month" (P64). Furthermore, CPOs are also responsible for speaking with parolees' "collateral contacts" (i.e., significant others), which is another time-consuming task (e.g., P126 described "constantly going to collaterals and contacts"). CPOs felt that the FOC measurements may not accurately capture the amount of work, such as interviewing collateral contacts, that CPOs must do as part of their supervisory duties.

While the nature of client supervision differs between CPOs and IPOs, both groups identified the amount of time devoted to parolees/prisoners as a time-consuming and stressful aspect of their work. When asked for the largest source of occupational stress, a CPO stated "caseload for sure…. The work itself, the volume" (P107). P126, a CPO, elaborated: "[when] case numbers go up… you start to panic and you're drowning. The stress is there and the brain doesn't shut off."

[2] There are also specific PO roles that have exceptional workloads and client supervision responsibilities, such as IPOs working in Intake Assessment Units and CPOs working in Community Correction Centres.

These participants' words clearly highlight the time-consuming nature of client supervision as significant occupational stressor.

Finally, IPOs and CPOs explained that the quantitative caseload/FOC measures fail to capture the complex relational nature of their work, including the fact that some prisoners/parolees are more time-consuming and emotionally-demanding to manage than others. P33, a CPO, described a time-consuming parolee she is supervising: "frequency of contact is once every two months, however, in the last three weeks, I have talked to him, and talked to his mom, and seen him at least twice a week. And so that work of what I've done is not shown anywhere, that I'm doing more than the policy work."

Many POs feel that their work entails a far broader range of duties than is reflected in the size of their caseload or FOC. Here, it is notable that many POs feel that the quantity of their client supervision may compromise its quality, by leaving POs with less time to develop relationships with prisoners/parolees and assist them in their efforts to leave prison and successfully reenter the community. P22 exemplified this concern, stating "we're putting our focus on quantity versus quality, I find. There should be more time spent with an offender to do that actual good assessment."

Overall, POs clearly expressed concern that the required amount of client supervision negatively affected both their stress levels and the quality of their work.

DEADLINES AND TIME MANAGEMENT

The intersection of high workloads and a perceived pressure from managers to complete occupational duties in a timely manner created stress related to time management for many participants. For example, P130 stated that POs "will just work around the clock" due to their high workloads. For many participants, the solution is to work extra hours to stay on top of their workload—a circumstance that creates additional stress.

POs reported the pressure of deadlines, which can be experienced as expected/legislated or unanticipated, as a major organizational stressor. P5 identified "the overwhelming workload and deadlines" as the most stressful aspect of her job. The stress of deadlines featured prominently for POs working in remote locations or specialized roles. P18, who works in a remote Northern location, explained that she was responsible for duties that would be done by multiple staff in a more populous setting—a circumstance that could become stressful when faced with multiple unanticipated deadlines. Meanwhile, IPOs working in intake assessment units work in a deadline-driven

environment in which they must complete the intake assessment of one prisoner in a week's time:

> We run a case a week. Essentially, we have 4.5 days to complete a case…. So, in that week I need to review the files, I need to request any files that are outstanding, I need to pull the offender's file…. I have to write what's called a crime profile…. Then I write the correctional plan…. Then, if he is being transferred, the assessment for decision which will pen place him. So, theoretically in that one week, I have the at least two, sometimes three documents, to write after a complete file review…. And there's also the interview of the offender in that timeframe. (P29)

Noteworthy is that some POs work in non-typical settings in which the stress of deadlines can be particularly acute.

Another source of stress for POs is that deadlines can occur, as previously mentioned, unexpectedly, forcing them to put aside their anticipated workload and "put out fires" (i.e., deal with an immediate crisis situation). For example, an IPO explained that her work with "high needs, high risk guys" in a maximum-security institution created unpredictability in her daily routine: "you're constantly dealing with [prisoners], every day with you're putting out a fire of some sort" (P12). IPOs, who work in an unpredictable prison environment, particularly expressed the view that they had to sometimes rapidly shift their work focus to respond to crises: "fires come first, right? If an offender is going through a crisis or there's been an institutional crisis, like an assault or a death or an overdose, you deal with that first" (P3). Overall, deadlines are not only a source of stress for many participants, but they are also understood as limiting POs' ability to manage the emotional and mental toll that the job can take (see *Mental Health*).

Finally, some participants worried that the time pressures they faced meant that they could not complete their duties to a high degree of quality (e.g., "the most challenging aspect, I think, is not having enough time to do the work the way it should be done" (P30)). POs feel competing pressures between meeting deadlines and making confident professional assessments. The stress created by these pressures is compounded for POs, who recognize that the quality of their work contributes to public safety, as P30 further explained:

> I think that a lot of the time we don't get viewed as our job is that stressful. [The perception is] like, 'well, you write paperwork, you write reports, you don't respond to incidents. You know, how stressful can it be?' But we're dealing with deadlines where things will get done on time and properly or the safety of the public can be in real danger. So we have a lot of responsibilities, and I think that gets overlooked.

As participants clearly identify, time pressures create significant stress for POs as they seek to juggle various duties while ensuring, to the extent possible, that they fulfil their public safety responsibilities.

PAPERWORK AND ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

Participants identified various administrative tasks that occupied a lot of their time and caused stress or frustration. For example, P7 described "all the faxing, the photocopying, the emailing and scanning" as "irritating" and an "incredible waste of resources" given that POs could be devoting their time to other tasks. Meanwhile, P5 described "the slowness of…the offender management system that we use, or Phoenix, or submitting in a claim for travel. It's all the administrative stuff that just drives me crazy." However, the most consuming administrative task was the high volume of paperwork, notably report writing (e.g., "there's a lot of different reports and that takes a lot of time. You have to bring in the information from different areas.… To bring all that information together takes time" (P91)).

Notably, experienced POs felt that the volume of paperwork had increased during their tenure (e.g., "there's a lot of paperwork, more paperwork than there used to be" (P39)). The increasing volume of paperwork affects not only POs, but their immediate supervisors. P57, a parole supervisor, explained she had to read and check over each report her POs wrote: "there's an awful lot of quality control.… Let me double check that all the information is correct, and that the risk assessment's done properly, and so forth."

Participants' perceived much paperwork to be unnecessary or redundant (e.g., P26 expressed frustration at "certain useless reports"). Participants regularly used the phrase "ticky box" as a derisive term to denote what they felt was unnecessary paperwork that had to be completed to satisfy a specific policy or managerial directive. Others expressed frustration that, in their view, much of their paperwork was done solely to "cover your ass"—that is, for liability purposes (e.g., "we're becoming over-reliant on this paperwork, excuse my language, but 'cover your ass' kind of thing, where we've gotten away from parole work" (P5)). Paperwork, then, was seen by many POs to detract from working closely with and assisting clients. For example, P33 stated that paperwork and report-writing "doesn't leave much time for us to…cultivate the relationships that we need to actually effectively monitor [parolees] in the community, because we are so bogged down." P33 went on to estimate that she spends "90% of my time doing paperwork or sitting at my desk…and about 10% of my time actually trying to form connections with my guys."

Some POs working in specific roles faced higher-than-normal paperwork requirements. P72, an Intake Assessment Officer, explained that this role "is very heavy on report writing. We do a full assessment every week [and]

write up a new sentence defense." P24 stated that the different staffing responsibilities in women's correctional institutions created additional administrative burdens: "it was more paperwork in the women's institution [versus in a men's institution], rather than actually working with the offenders." P15 explained that POs working with Indigenous prisoners/parolees are required to write extra reports on their clients: "oh my gosh, there's so much report writing…[and] things that I have to consider within the analysis, like the Indigenous social history, that can be time-consuming but [are] very important." These data show that some POs are required to undertake additional paperwork and administrative tasks that, while important for working with certain populations of parolees/prisoners, can add to their workload.

STAFFING

Compounding the workload pressures felt by POs was a perception that staffing levels are inadequate, thus placing more responsibility and work on POs (e.g., P21 described her workplace as "so severely understaffed"). Participants described understaffing as contributing to increased workloads. For example, P121 stated: "there's not enough staff hired or available so that our [caseload] numbers can be at a manageable level."

Participants also noted the detrimental impacts of a lack of staff backfill when POs took holidays or health leaves. P24 explained that "we don't get coverage for our vacation time, so if I have to do 50 face-to-face contacts in a month, then I have to get the 50 done before I take my [vacation]." Not only did POs express concern about returning from a vacation to find a high (stress-inducing) workload, they also noted that taking leaves placed additional burdens on their coworkers: "emergencies will go to POs who are there [on site]…. Basically, whoever's left on site has to bear that additional responsibility" (P15).

Finally, participants explained that understaffing was not limited to POs, to the overall detriment of their work. P3, an IPO, explained that POs must work closely with staff in other departments, but that "every other department is lacking the resources too. They don't have enough people there." P101 described high staff turnover in her workplace, causing gaps in administrative and managerial support and resultant stress for POs:

> Our administrative staff works on three-month contracts [so] we lose our assistants every three months. We get new one, and then get a new one, and then we get new one, and it does not stop. It's crazy…. So it's really stressful. Even when I started working in the institution, the first year…I had five [managers] pass through…. Five times I had to be basically on my own…. The constant movement of staff, it's ridiculous.

As these participants' statements indicate, staffing issues across a case management

team can cause POs significant stress as they attempt to complete their supervisory and support duties.

BEING THE "CATCH-ALL" OR "DUMPING GROUND"

Finally, POs expressed the view that they were expected to take on a wide variety of tasks beyond their expected occupational duties—described regularly by participants as being positioned as a "catch-all" or "dumping ground" for tasks that other members of a client's case management team did not want to undertake. For example, P111 described being "dumped on so much being here [at the institution]" and P97 noted that many tasks "get thrown our way that don't fit into other boxes…. That was kind of surprising how much stuff that wasn't in my specified job title which we actually did."

The effect of being a "catch-all" was felt by POs who already felt overworked and under-supported. P3 explained how taking on a variety of tasks impacted her daily workload: "you deal with these sometimes small problems, but it can take you all day to figure out." POs feel that they serve as a catch-all or dumping ground and are burdened with a wide variety of case management duties—all of which can occupy their time, add to their already high workload, and detrimentally affect their ability to focus on their public safety responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

This section highlights how PO stress is generated and compounded by the volume of work (i.e., client supervision), the nature of specific job tasks (e.g., paperwork, administrative tasks), and factors, such as deadlines and low staffing levels, that add to their workloads. In addition, many POs feel that they are expected to take on additional case management tasks (i.e., be a "catch-all"). Our data reveal that these intersecting occupational stressors leave POs feeling overworked and, as will be discussed, experiencing compromised mental health and well-being. Further, participants expressed concern that their volume of work created time pressures that, in turn, impacted the quality of their work. Given these findings, an adjustment of PO workloads could be a significant step toward improving their levels of occupational stress and, by extension, their overall health and well-being.

Job Satisfaction

Although participants described many challenging and stressful parts of their jobs, many described their job as satisfying or fulfilling. P109 expressed: "I wanted this job and I hold my head high doing it.... I believe in what I'm doing and I consider it a privilege." The pride evident in this participant's words speak to the sentiment, expressed by some participants, that employment as a PO can provide a sense of job satisfaction. In this section, we provide an overview of participants' feelings of satisfaction regarding their work. Interviewees were asked a range of questions related to feelings of job satisfaction, including questions about their favourite aspect of parole work; whether they felt they had a voice within CSC; and how they related to their colleagues. We outline interviewees' general feelings toward parole work, followed by an examination of several job and organizational characteristics that impacted feelings of satisfaction and reward among research participants. Specifically, participants' commitment to rehabilitation and public safety, job security, and relationships with colleagues are examined via participant quotations.

CONTENTMENT WITH THE PO ROLE

Most participants felt secure in their current role and were not looking to switch careers or "climb the ladder" (P49) in CSC. Some participants had previously considered moving into a managerial role at a later point in their career, but were dissuaded after observing the occupational realities faced by their immediate managers or personal experience in acting management roles. P1, for example, stated that he "got a taste of management pretty early in my career…acting as parole supervisor" but did not enjoy the experience, and thus has "given up all aspirations to move up." However, a minority of participants did envision moving into a management position. Thus, while most participants were content in their PO role, some saw their current role as a stepping stone to a managerial career within CSC.

Participants also compared their current employment to past or potential careers. Here, POs with prior experience as CXs (n=32) appreciated the work-life balance afforded by regular hours rather than shiftwork. Others appreciated that the PO position allowed them to work in public safety without being in a role that did not require carrying a firearm (e.g., "I have zero desire to carry a gun… I don't want to do that" (P31)). Other POs stressed their interest in helping others as the primary motivation for their occupational entry.

HELPING, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Participants commonly identified the relational work with clients, particularly where they felt they contributed to long-term change in people's lives, as the greatest source of job satisfaction. They valued "seeing somebody grow" (P109), "being able to make change" (P132), and "the positive cases and the cases where [I feel] like 'oh my god, I think I made a difference there!'" (P23). P115 explains:

> The favourite part of my job is when I'm able to help an individual successfully transition to the next level, whether that's getting the [maximum security] guy to get to medium [security institution] or getting the TD guy to get his shit together to get back out into the community. It's that assisting them in their transition towards a positive direction. That's the best part.

Many POs see helping (ex-)prisoners as central to their work and derive pride and satisfaction from performing this role. The relational aspects of their work with clients, then, was appealing for many participants (e.g., "I really love supervising the guys" (P39)). POs understood the relationship-building component of their job to be foundational to their task of helping prisoners/parolees transition to the community:

> The favourite part of my job is working with an offender who is highly motivated, and ready to accept help, and has just followed through on a commitment to self-improvement, and does what they need to do in a genuine way. Then I can work with them and help them achieve their goals and get them safely into the community (P109).

As P109 indicates, POs understand the relational and helping aspects of parole work to lead directly into their mandate to protect public safety—itself another source of job satisfaction for many participants. To exemplify, P6 said:

> The only reason I have any pride in any of my work is that I know there's those few and far between cases where I really get through to a guy, and I really believe that I've helped him, and he's not going to re-offend as a result.

Thus, POs linked building relationships and helping clients with contributing to public safety (e.g., "making the change [in clients] and then also being able to protect the public" (P132)). Participants noted the satisfaction derived from making recommendations that directly influenced public safety decision-making (e.g.,

"reaching what are the best recommendations for decision-makers, with public safety being a paramount consideration" (P2)).

Bearing witness to people's change and progress was experienced as a particularly meaningful and rewarding experience that contributed to participants' job satisfaction. Interviewees explained they enjoyed the ability to learn about people's histories and lives—even though this meant being exposed to often troubling and upsetting materials—and to take a role in guiding clients during their reintegration, which, as criminological research has shown (e.g., McKendy & Ricciardelli, 2020; Western, 2018), is a difficult and trying journey.

It should be noted, that interviewees' narratives clearly showed that focused and thoughtful one-on-one work with clients was linked to an increased sense of job satisfaction, as P109 said:

> I use my voice, I think, to do my job the way that I think it needs to be done…. Where I get satisfaction is from working with the offenders on my caseload to try to do the absolute best I absolutely can for them, because in so doing I think I can protect the public and I can get some job satisfaction out of being here.

Participants highlighted they take the work of learning about clients' lives and connecting with them very seriously. They see personal connection as essential to achieving both client reintegration *and* public safety, which is significant as POs feel committed to and responsible for both these tasks and goals (e.g., "public safety is paramount for sure, but it's also helping someone to access resources and move past to try to change their lifestyle" (P5)).

Beyond client interaction, various participants highlighted the satisfaction they gained from writing reports which, they explained, demanded high-level analysis and a range of other skills (i.e., information gathering, analysis, clear, concise writing). In response to being asked about the favourite aspect of their job, P117 shared these feelings when she explained that "I really like writing reports only because I can tie everything together from my interview with the offender."

Beyond report writing, participants enjoyed the inter-connection between the individual tasks associated with parole work. The ability to be involved in a person's case—from interviewing clients and close contacts, to collating the information and analyzing it, to writing up a recommendation to the Parole Board of Canada—gave POs satisfaction. They valued their continued and direct involvement in these different stages of a person's correctional journey, seeing a case through, and feeling like their work played a critical part in their client's rehabilitation and, in turn, the safety of the community. For POs, contributing to the protection of the public, through both supporting and monitoring their clients, is an important source of job satisfaction.

PAY AND JOB CONDITIONS

Rate of pay and job security were two commonly cited sources of job satisfaction. For instance, P21 felt POs endure the difficult aspects of the job because they are "married to the paycheck and the pension, because we get paid very well." Some participants, like P31, identified their occupational "stability" as a source of job satisfaction, in addition to pay. Other POs, mostly those working in the community, explained that even before the COVID-19 pandemic they had a degree of flexibility in their work hours which they appreciated:

> Oftentimes I go in at 10 [AM] because I go to the gym before I go to work or I do some volunteer work and they let me go…. on that personal level, it's great. I can do personal things in the day as long as I'm getting my stuff [work] done and being flexible (P49).

However, despite many CPOs describing a degree of control over their work schedule, as well as having more duties that inherently involve off-site work, IPOs typically described a workplace expectation that they would work set hours each week and be on-site for almost all their tasks.

Select POs who experienced job instability reported additional stress. Here, POs working on indeterminate contracts faced uncertainty about their future employment and found that "job security can be a little stressful" (P18). P150, who had secured a determinate contract after time in an indeterminate role, described the impact this job insecurity had on her workload and stress:

> We were on contract, so we were sent from one place to the next. We moved around, so we were always getting to know new inmates. That adds to your workload. It adds an extra level of difficulty.

Overall, job stability, along with pay, contributes to the job satisfaction of those in determinate positions, but is a source of stress for POs who face uncertain professional futures as they work on determinate contracts.

CHALLENGE AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

Participants were also satisfied with the professional and intellectual challenge of their work, some reporting being drawn to parole work because it dovetailed with their academic interests and training. For example, P108 "got really interested in the in the job of a parole officer" after completing a practicum during his criminology studies. Moreover, the job involves inherent challenges that some POs relish. Many enjoy the analytical nature of the work, describing work with parolees/prisoners as a "puzzle" to be solved (e.g., "I like putting the puzzle together and then trying to figure out something that'll work for that person to try and make a better puzzle" (P117)). The investigative, problem-solving component of the job fed into the POs' understanding of their professional commitment to public safety

through the recommendations they provided. As P27 expressed, many POs find the job to be "fascinating, super fulfilling, interesting, and meaningful work"—and, therefore, the nature of the work was seen to provide fulfilment and satisfaction.

While interviewees shared many positive feelings about parole work in general, they also described a range of challenges that could make their work stressful and draining, and that even made some participants question their commitment to a career in parole long-term (see further below). Participants noted the immense responsibility associated with their job. For example, P112 replied, when asked what he felt was the most challenging aspect of the work, "the amount of responsibility" POs carry, along with "the amount of work". He added, "I don't think people understand the scope of the job and the weight of responsibility on it." Another interviewee, P20 spoke to the emotional weight associated with POs' responsibility when she explained:

> There's been a lot of negative experiences within corrections. I think it's a job that just exposes you to that.… I sometimes find myself being envious of people who have, like, nine-to-five jobs where they just go, and there's…not the risk of unpredictable human behavior.

While participants derived significant reward from these high-responsibility tasks—working with clients, writing reports, and making recommendations regarding their clients' future—they also highlighted the intense responsibility they felt for their clients and the safety and well-being of the larger community. High responsibility can become a challenge and affect job satisfaction when people feel stressed, overworked, unable to disconnect from their job (see the words of P20), or when the level of responsibility is not matched by the level of recognition they receive for their work.

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND MANAGERS

Participants also found job satisfaction in their positive and supportive relationships with colleagues, including other POs, correctional officers, and immediate managers. P130 noted that her "coworkers are excellent" and P128 stated that the "short-term rewards [of the job] are the relationships that you make with your coworkers in your peer group." Several participants explained that—in contrast to those who found management to be a significant organizational stressor—they enjoyed supportive and amicable relationships with their supervisors (e.g., "I absolutely adore [my manager], I would say that we're friends" (P21)).

Interviewees' descriptions of how COVID-19 caused a reduction in social contact and interaction between colleagues provide another indicator of the importance of collegial support and togetherness for POs:

> I've missed that socializing, that de-stress time, that, you know, funny stories people are sharing or, at other times, when things are maybe a little rough and they need some support…. We do what we can through email, or all our meetings are over the phone now, so you do what you can with what's kind of what's available to you. And there's some that I text back and forth. (P35)

While feeling supported by colleagues, several participants noted wishing for greater acknowledgment for their work by the employer (see *Organizational Culture and Climate*). The lack of recognition from the employer is significant, given that interviewees felt they devoted significant time and energy in their work, dealt with challenging situations, and did work that contributed directly to public safety. They wished they were recognized for their work in a more regular, positive way. Overall, positive collegial relationships with coworkers, including managers, is a key factor in their job satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, in this section we provided insight into participants' job satisfaction, which describes people's occupational attitudes and feelings toward their job. Our data point to many of the positive aspects of parole work. However, we find that organizational characteristics of the job have the ability to impact POs' emotional and mental well-being as well as their feelings of job satisfaction in either positive or negative ways. Employees who are stressed and/or feel undervalued are less likely to enjoy their work and/or see their organization in a positive manner, while those who feel recognized, valued, and heard show higher degrees of job satisfaction. High job satisfaction is linked to better outcomes in terms of job performance, employee well-being, and commitment to the organization (Lambert & Paoline III, 2008). Improving job satisfaction among POs has the potential to positively impact POs' well-being and attitudes toward their work which, in turn, may also positively affect clients' lives and futures and the well-being of the larger community.

Organizational Stressors: Organizational Climate and Culture

Participants described organizational stressors arising from the climate, culture, and policies of CSC. In this section, we outline POs' experiences and perceptions of CSC's organizational culture, their relationship with management, and feelings of lacking support and respect. As with the previously-discussed stressors, we note that these organizational stressors often intersected and compounded to create additional stress for POs.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Some participants described CSC's organizational culture as "political"—that is, an environment in which decision-making and behaviours were based on power relationships and could unfairly affected certain people (e.g., "it's so political…. Like, if you wanna be a ladder climber, you basically just have to kiss the right person's ass" (P121)). The view that promotion within the organization was based on relationships, rather than merit, was echoed by P115:

> I find it's become over the years less supportive and more political…. People are trying to climb the ladder, so they're going to try and please whoever they need to please in order to do that. So, it's a matter of who do they have to throw under the bus or who do they have to make an example of to show that they're doing a great job, instead of reaching out and supporting people…. I've seen some of my colleagues treated horrifically all to try and show how great a manager they are.

Participants who identified the organization culture as "political" saw this as contributing to a negative workplace experience (e.g., "[I find [politics] is my biggest struggle" (P46)). P115 added that the "politics" of her former workplace created an environment that was "very negative, toxic, and it was not a healthy place."

Many POs also expressed the belief that CSC is a reactive, rather than proactive, organization (e.g., describing CSC as "so reactionary" (P31), and "totally reactive" (P115)), which created challenges and stresses. Some participants felt that POs' safety concerns were not taken seriously "unless something tragic happens" (P24) or that CSC should "focus their energy on preventative [measures], because [POs have] had their lives threatened" (P115).

Participants also linked organizational reactivity to poor responses to POs' mental health concerns. P147 stated that "we really don't have any prevention related to our state of mental health. If there's an incident, there will be debriefings after the situation and

everything, but on a daily basis to ensure that we're doing well…I get the feeling that we're kind of left on our own." P6 suggested that "if they were a little more proactive in, you know, support, morale, emotionally, and all that kind of stuff, they'd probably have less staff going off with burn out and whatnot."

A reactive organizational culture was understood by POs to create additional workload stress. P146 stated that the most challenging part of her job was "always being given new orders new priorities, new policies…. so this brings a lot of change perpetual change in how [we do] our reports and the priorities what we need to focus on." Similarly, P128 explained that "the most challenging aspect of the job is the ever-changing law and policy and every changing expectation." The frequent changes in policies and procedures described by these participants do not, in their view, take into account the occupational realities of POs. P19 stated that policymakers "come up with these brilliant ideas and then they expect us to just do it with very little consultation from the front lines. It's patronizing, almost." P30 similarly stated that "the people who make the policies are not in touch with the people who are in the front lines." As these participants' words show, a perception of organizational reactivity is connected with POs' feelings that changes to policy and procedure can complicate their work and create additional challenges that they must navigate.

Finally, participants described a hierarchical structure in CSC, which they perceive to inhibit meaningful change that could improve the working conditions and well-being of POs. Participants used words like "hierarchy" or "military" to describe the organizational structure and culture, and explained how this climate made it difficult for POs to advocate for change. Several participants felt that questioning management decisions was risky for their career (e.g., "everyone's afraid to say anything against management" (P39)). Even participants who felt that they could raise concerns with immediate managers recognized that the structure of CSC meant that the impact of such discussions would be limited. P27 stated:

> One of the weaknesses in our organization is that…if we want some sort of meaningful change, we have to talk to our supervisor about it. It's kind of even almost unfair to [the supervisor], in a way, because it always puts them in the position of not just overseeing the workload of their staff, but overseeing the mental, emotional wellness of the environment…. You'll never see the

> district director or the area director coming to your office and having a seat and asking you 'how is your day?' and 'how are things going here?'… So everything is filtered and that's where you stopped being heard, right?

Finally, several participants linked what they considered a paramilitary or hierarchical organizational culture to stigma around discussing mental health struggles (see Health and Well-being). For example, P117 stated that her workplace had a "culture of 'if you can't hack it, then maybe you shouldn't be here.'" For many POs, the perception of a hierarchical structure that discourages employees from speaking out about their challenges and struggles contributes to an organizational culture in which POs feel their mental health and well-being concerns are not taken seriously and adds to their occupational stress.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH MANAGEMENT

The importance of managerial support, including from immediate supervisors and upper managers such as wardens, was described as deeply affecting POs' workplace satisfaction stress levels, and mental health and well-being. For example, P2 stated that "a good supportive supervisor is very integral, 'cause this work is hard enough," adding that the understanding and support of managers can "make or break how much you enjoy your job." POs with good relationships with immediate managers described this as significant to their job satisfaction (e.g., "I got a great supervisor…and that's probably why I've hung on to doing this work" (P5)).

While some POs described positive relationships with their immediate managers, more frequently they reported negative experiences. Participants used words like "offensive" (P6), "poor in addressing issues in the office" (P22) or "very closed minded" (P30) to describe managers. P21 stated that POs "are the first person to get thrown under the bus" by management, while several participants expressed the view that, while management did provide opportunity for POs to give feedback, their concerns were not acted upon:

> Management often sits down with us, about once a year, and hears about our concerns, but there's never any action. We get we get a lot of false promises and then they just hope that we move on. And we do, because we're so beaten [down] and feel like we don't actually have a voice. You just start to give up. (P1)

Some participants also felt that upper management lacked experience with parole work and, as a result, did not have awareness of or respect for the PO role. P2 lamented the fact that "many of the Wardens, and Deputy Wardens, etcetera, are from security side of the house…[and] a lot of work sometimes of interventions is not appreciated by operations." P107 similarly stated that many upper managers "have never worked the frontlines…

[so] I don't think they always know exactly what it is we do and how hard we work."

Other participants felt they were micromanaged, leading to additional stress and concern. P21, an IPO, explained that working in an institution, "there's like three tiers of management on top of you, [so] you're micromanaged to the hilt." Others described the detrimental effect that being micromanaged can have on POs' job satisfaction and well-being (e.g., "the [POs] that are the most unhappy with their positions are the ones that are micromanaged" (P101)).

Many participants also felt that management did not take genuine concern for their well-being. P79 expressed the view that management "talks the talk and doesn't walk the walk to promote a stress free, healthy worksite environment." P6 stated that management "just don't care about their employees…they just don't really seem to care about our well-being or our needs. She added: "I don't think I have it in me with this organization anymore."

The stress felt from relationships with immediate management was also felt by participants with managerial experience, who explained the challenges they faced in juggling the concerns of POs and upper management. P30's experience in a temporary management assignment led her to reflect that, as a middle manager, "you're dealing with a lot of staff but you're also dealing with upper management, so you're kind in the middle [and] you're getting it from the top, you're getting it from the bottom, and…it's really hard to get everybody happy." Many POs believed that their immediate managers were put in difficult circumstance and were not adequately supported by upper management. P50, for example, stated that "middle management in CSC, in general, needs a lot more support in training…. They aren't given those [interpersonal management] skills. When you become a middle manager, they're just like 'okay, here's a new chair, here's a new role, good luck with that.'"

Clearly, POs' relationships with their immediate and upper managers are a source of tension and stress in their workplace. Not only can relationships with immediate managers significantly influence POs' job satisfaction and occupational well-being, but the actions of upper management can also affect how POs perceive their value and respect within the organization.

LACK OF SUPPORT AND RESPECT

Many POs described feeling unsupported and not respected within CSC. P39 stated "I think I'm respected by the guys on my caseload, by the social worker, by the psychologist, but not by management." P19 explained that CSC is "big, it's bureaucratic…[and] I don't feel a lot of support coming from above." P3 stated that, among upper management, "there's a perception that we don't do a lot, which is bizarre," and added:

> It's like they just want us to do what we're told, and do our job, and go away. Because to bother with us would be a huge bother. To learn what we do, and to deal with the problems that we're dealing with, that would be a pretty big task.

A lack of respect and recognition contributes to the stress of the job, to the detriment of POs' mental health and well-being. P6 lamented that "it's already such a tough work environment that it should be a kind of place where they go out of their way to look after their employees, and make them feel valued and respected, and it constantly feels like the opposite." P123 described POs becoming "jaded" from the lack of organizational recognition for their work. She added: "I find that that's stressful, too, because you're kind of on this hamster wheel all the time, and at the same time you're not getting recognition for it." P117 felt that her immediate and upper managers were not "supportive and positive" and that "that's almost more of a stress to me than the heavy caseload, because I feel like I can't go to anyone for help, because as soon as you ask for help, well, you're just shitty at your job."

Most POs expressed a high degree of pride in their professionalism and contribution to public safety (see Job Satisfaction), yet, felt that CSC did not acknowledge their work. P130 explained that "I've had a folder for so many years now, so when I get a complement for something I stick it in there, because it's so rare that you get something like that there's no real recognition for things." P29 expressed the belief that POs generally acknowledged each other's quality of work, but "not so much management. I don't ever feel like there's ever a pat on the back for a good catch or a 'good case' or a 'good job'." P115, while critical of management's lack of recognition of her work, placed responsibility on broader structural factors within CSC: "I don't think the lack of acknowledgement is on purpose, I think they're way too busy, too, they're just frantically trying to manage their workload." The importance of positive feedback to POs was articulated by P54, who was among the minority of participants who described receiving praise from management for their work: "I get thank yous and I get thumbs up, and emails, and stuff like that, and it's so refreshing." However, as made clear by participants' statements, such recognition was rarely described by POs.

Some IPOs described lack of respect arising from their relationships with security staff. P2 stated that "the interventions folks feel sometimes like a second class to the operational folks." Other IPOs described frictions with or disrespect from correctional officers. P1 stated that "the correctional officers in general don't understand what a parole officer does…. You might have to put up with a bunch of…stupid little jabs about how we aren't worth the money." P33 added: "I've been yelled at by officers more than I've been yelled at by inmates." While some IPOs described good working relationships with security staff, for many these relationships were a source of tension and stress.

Participants also felt unsupported in training opportunities (e.g., "there's a lack of training, there's that lack of support" (P131)). Participant 23 lamented that annual training days, in which CPOs and IPOs from different sites would meet together, were no longer organized: "They cut all of that, they cut all of the funding…. That would be nice to have a minimal amount of funding so we could together once a year and do some training together." Others lamented a poor quality of training offered (e.g., "some of it is absolutely redundant" (P123)), which was linked to broader feelings among POs that they lack organizational support:

> We don't have the training we need, we don't have the supports we need. Our training has gone from experts coming in and giving us really good training, to…a watered down version,…to, more recently, 'hey, your stuff's all online! Good luck! Hope you can figure it out on your own!' So yeah, I don't think we're supported at all. Not mentally, not emotionally, not with training, not with much of anything. (P115)

Clearly, for many POs, the limited opportunities for high quality and relevant training contributes to a broader feeling of being undervalued and under-supported within CSC.

CONCLUSION

In this section, we show how POs' perceptions of organizational culture and support, including from middle and upper managers, contribute to frustration and occupational stress. Participants described an organizational culture that was "political," reactive, and hierarchical—characteristics that they felt marginalized PO concerns and, in some instances, relegated them to a low status within the organization. Relatedly, participants expressed the feeling that POs are not adequately supported or respected within CSC, and that their concerns are not taken seriously by decision-makers within the organization. Addressing these feelings would entail changes at both the immediate and upper management levels, as both were sources of PO stress. Ultimately, POs made clear that their job satisfaction, and by extension their well-being and mental health, would be improved by greater support and respect from their managers and, more broadly, CSC as a whole.

Health and Well-being

Participants discussed the numerous ways occupational stressors affected their health and well-being. In this section, we first provide an overview of the health impacts of parole work. We then discuss major themes arising participants' discussions of mental health, specifically: vicarious trauma, burnout, access to health and well-being resources, suggestions for improving mental health supports, coping strategies, the impact of difficult cases, stigma, and work-life balance.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Participants disclosed their jobs impacted their mental and physical health, which in turn impacted relationships and their personalities. For instance, P1 said "I realized that I'd been venting my stress on my family just verbally…. It got to a point where my son told me at the end of June last year that he was afraid to talk to me." Moreover, participants disclosed physical health injuries at work, such as "injury to my back" (P15). However, despite her workplace accident causing her back injury, P15 still feels that "hardest thing is the frustration behind my job, and for sure it's affecting my blood pressure because I've dealt with um uh migraine headaches for the last, well, since I started with CSC… just tension headaches, migraines, tension headaches, migraines. They last for days." Thus, parole work can and does result in physical and mental health injuries, each impacting the other, like P15 whose frustration at work creates migraines. P20 feels their "heart rate increase and I get, the night before [work], I sometimes get physically ill because I'm anticipating the amount of work that I have to do the next day. It's definitely, like, increased my anxiety and physically I like feel those effects on my on my body."

Participants discussed exposure to physical trauma as part and parcel of their occupational work, although, thankfully, less than half of our participants had experienced direct physical violence to their person. Participants working in institutions described having prisoners "try to assault me" (P2) or "throw things at me" (P9), almost being "grabbed by the neck" by a cuffed prisoner (P15), having a prisoner "smash his fist into something" (P27), and witnessing "an inmate stab another inmate in front of me" (P97). Some spoke of being "trapped" with prisoners because of barriers closing, and being exposed to potential violence, particularly threats from angered prisoners (P117). In the community, P130 speaks spoke about a client not letting her "leave the apartment" once she had completed her visit, and not knowing if the client she visited was armed. Whether working in institutions or the community, the consequence of POs' exposure to violence was being "always on" (P9)—a sort of

hypervigilance born out of their occupational work.

Participants spoke to the impacts of their job on their mental health, particularly the stress of keeping up with their occupational demands. For instance, P115 explains that "the sheer workload volume has impacted me," creating insomnia on nights prior to work. Workload, specifically "time management" (P22), was described as taxing and stressful, as was reviewing files and the operational components of the job (e.g., death of clients by suicide, witnessing stabbings, being threatened (P27), or investigated). Others, like P49, described their mental health suffering from "compassion fatigue" and impacted by, as will be discussed, "vicarious trauma" (e.g., reading client files (P130)). These are among the reasons participants cited that they received diagnosis of posttraumatic stress disorder (P25) and other mental health injuries.

P2 explained the impacts on mental health are significant and, as such, "it's not the right job or career for everyone", as they lamented the death of a "couple of friends…. One killed themselves". P118 spoke to her experiences witnessing mental health challenge her co-workers: "in the last 18 months I've seen four parole officers here go off and be diagnosed with PTSD and [my] manager went off on stress leave about two months ago." Further, the mental health impact is intensified when caseloads become the shared responsibility of colleagues. For instance, P3 described when "people were told that that [a colleague] had killed himself, and then that same day you have offenders saying 'well what's going to happen to me? He's my PO.'" Thus, there is a combined stress that ties the well-being of colleagues to workloads, because of the lack of backfill for an absent co-worker (see *Organizational Stressors: Workload and Job Tasks*).

P9 spoke of the mental health challenges that arise from an accumulation of incidents, as well as particularly trying cases. She has "been threatened, and my family has been threatened", while P3 spoke about the psychological impacts of experiencing verbal abuse, explaining "the type of people we work with don't necessarily have great communication skills. So I'm often yelled at. I am often having someone trying to intimidate me. I'm not overtly threatened but certainly feel threatened often." P9 described herself as a product of her work experiences: "I've experienced aftermath of riots, I've experienced aftermath of murders of, like, institutional murders. I have experienced… reading these guys' reports. And the conflict that I've had within the institution over the years, I think that has shaped who I am and who I've become."

Recognizing that working in community corrections entails emotional labour (Fowler et al., 2020; Westaby et al., 2020), P5 described parole work as "very emotionally, mentally taxing work". P31 described trial and parole hearings as emotional, stressful and potentially traumatic, from a combination of the close proximity to the criminalized person, hearing the victim impact statements and seeing the victims, and being responsible to support the "offender". P6 explained the psychological impacts of being the PO for "high profile" cases, particularly when "the victims are very active" and a PO, given their occupation is to support the criminalized person, becomes "like public enemy number 2." Thus, in doing their jobs, POs not only feel liable for those under their supervision or on their caseload, but also feel villainized at times by the public because of their occupational responsibilities and clients, which further affects their mental health. Here, participants reported psychological trauma resulting from the actions of those under their supervision. For instance, a "serious situation happened at maximum security where one of the officers was badly assaulted and it was my offender that did it" (P12). P72 described having to interview a prisoner on their caseload who, the night prior, had murdered another lifer. These examples reinforce that participants are negatively impacted by the actions, although beyond their control, of their clients, particularly when someone is harmed or killed. This is particularly difficult in the community, but also holds true for IPOs. They recall a sense of guilt where "I should have seen it coming from my inmate, why didn't I know my inmate was gonna do it? And of course I don't have a crystal ball" (P12). Thus, despite realizing some actions are not preventable, there is still guilt associated with being the PO whose client transgressed comportment norms tied to pro-social behaviour and instead engaged in criminalized anti-social behaviours.

P109 moved from institutional parole to community parole. She explained how her work in institutional parole was still impacting her:

> In the community, I saw a parole officer who I knew from the assessment unit that had gone to maximum security, and she was talking to me about her job and I just I had to end the conversation. I just, I couldn't even hear it. It was just like re-traumatizing me cause I just needed to get out of jail, I needed to be out of it. I needed to be away from the razor wire and the steel bars. I just, I couldn't, I had reached, I had exceeded my tolerance and my threshold for depravity and for violence and degradation and all of that.

P141, conversely, described experiencing more trauma working in the community, where she feels more "alone." Specifically, she explained that in the "community, where you're still [at] times alone and you're facing very stressful situation." Indifferent to working in the community or institution, participants felt the occupational role demanded hypervigilance.

As a consequence, P126 explained that "I find that when I go out of a city and, like, outside of a travel radius, so my offenders cannot travel beyond it without getting in trouble, I feel like that's where I can like fully relax. Deep exhale." POs are clearly impacted psychologically by their work and it spills into their personal life.

Finally, other POs talked about the mental health impact of CSC's bureaucracy and management. P2 stated his "number one stressor" is "interacting with the bureaucracy in and of itself." P22, who has a diagnosis of general anxiety disorder, explained that their workspace requires "100% better leadership. Our management is poor in addressing issues in the office, so when you deal with difficult work and people aren't doing well, it comes out in your office environment. When we're overworked, you know, you don't have the most positive workplace. Corrections is known to be a very positive place to work (laughter)."

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Vicarious trauma was described by nearly all participants in our study. They spoke of reading criminal profiles, records, and victim impact statements, viewing images, and learning about incidents involving those on their caseload as potentially psychologically traumatizing. For example, P30 described how she speaks to a mental health professional to discuss:

> Cases that I've had. I've cried when I read, you know, victim impacts and stuff like that. And because there's such details, sometimes you see pictures and that, and you can't get that out of your head. Like, I still remember quotes that you have happened before, people being killed, and that, like, children. And, you know, those things you just… don't look at things the same anymore.

Although not a direct victim, P30 is deeply impacted by the actions of her clients and reading the casefiles. Others, like P6, describing the lingering impacts of her work: "some of the cases are pretty nasty, and I mean, I think anyone would have lingering effects from what they've read…. You dream about it and sometimes you can get scared." P7 described the sources of vicarious trauma, explaining that:

> Some of the files are tough to read, especially when you're looking at the hard copy file and there are pictures of the victims and so on… I try very hard to separate what the guy did, from who he is. And I find—again, I think that might be my background—'cause I find, I'd say 99 percent of them have had horrific backgrounds. Now it's not an excuse, but I think I try to focus more on that than, than what they did.

Likewise, P26 described the impact of images in files in terms of vicarious experience, explaining:

> There were pictures in the police report of the body, and I've never seen that before. Normally they take those out and so that was, I was unprepared for that. And that was pretty scarring, that was; and so, every time I talked to someone who's assigned to this guy, I'm like 'hey, don't read the police report' [laughing].

P31 said that exposure to images has changed over time, but recalls "when I first started, they used to include in the files, um, the crime scene photos. I had seen more dead bodies than I would ever want to. Thankfully they no longer do that, although some of the descriptions are just as horrifying quite frankly." P21 also described the impact of her vicarious experiences: "I was going home with headaches, I was having nightmares from the files that I was reading, I wasn't able to sleep…. I mean it doesn't happen as often as you think that you read a horrible file, but when you read a horrible file it sticks with you for life." In consequence, she explained "I don't watch *Law and Order*, I don't watch any of the crime shows, I don't watch any of those things. I used to love horror movies I don't watch horror movies any more…. I told you about how hard dating is. An overall feeling of unsafety and like I know this job has changed me in a way I wish it hadn't, 'cause I, I still am, but I used to be very full of life I would talk to anybody."

Participants also discussed how their job exposes them to vicarious trauma in operational responsibilities. For instance, P115 described vicarious trauma from a specific incident, explaining: "I've had an offender murder another offender in the gym, where I had to watch the video so I could report exactly what he did in writing for my recommendation for him to go to the SHU [Special Handling Unit]." P3 also spoke to vicarious trauma, providing the example of when "a mom is crying on the phone, and you wish you could do more, but you can't or it's all over the place." P23 recalled hearing her co-worker screaming and fearing that she was "dead," explaining she cried that night over the vicarious trauma. P115 talked about the potential psychological trauma involved when performing "verbal judo to talk [down] this person who's distraught, or angry, or has mental health issues." She further explained that, in her job, "another huge stress is when you read those criminal profiles. The horrendous things that these individuals have done is mindboggling, and you have to talk to them about it". P128 discussed the impact of exposure to vicarious trauma on the practice of parole work: "it really kind of takes a chunk out of your soul having to sit and talk to a man who thinks it's okay to stab nine year-olds in the vagina with butcher knifes." Overall, P146 explained that "we're in a culture where all that violence has to be normalized, and for some people it can have consequences on you. If it has an impact on you, people will think that you're not capable of doing the job and you

shouldn't be there, so it [is] difficult sometimes to admit those weaknesses, to experience those difficulties in our environment."

BURNOUT

Many participants, at least 18, described burning out. P5, like others, simply said "I had burnout," which she attributed to the stress of juggling work (e.g., "overwhelming workload and deadlines") and family and personal demands (e.g., "parenting", "cancer"). For P117, "burnout", specially "emotional burnout," was thought to be the "most challenging aspect" of her occupational work. She explained that she will "dream" about her job and clients and that there is a creep between work and personal boundaries. P9 felt that understaffing of POs has resulted in those actively working "burning out," adding "we've been telling management this for 20 years, that the caseload numbers are not manageable, but they're not listening." Others, like P18, attributed burnout to the lack of backfill when people take mental health leave or leave CSC altogether: "Parole officers would also be improved, so they might have less people going off on stress leave or less people leaving the service."

Concern about burning out was also common among respondents, like P5, who was medicated for her "burnout" but otherwise had no mental health disorder diagnoses. P20 worried, as she "hear[d] that people burn out eventually" and P21 felt that "I've been trying to create an exit strategy…. My first six months in the Service, um, was such an eye opener… because I looked around I saw so many unhealthy, mentally unwell, burnt out staff."

To address burnout, P102 suggested maintaining hybrid working conditions: "I think that could help in a lot of issues even we've talked about…. Just the option for telework to be more available to people if they're able to be productive on telework. I think that's a really good option in combating simply burnout, 'cause they're able to be at home." Others, like P121 felt that "mental readiness" courses were not enough for mental health support and more was needed to identify the onset of burnout (e.g., "when to identify when you're feeling burnt out, like what the warning signs are"). Further, participants spoke of needing "more recognition [and] more support" (P131) because, as P124 explained, "we are not recognized in terms of the correctional process by the public in general … [and by] our senior management." Although P20 found accessing EAP for burnout rather simple, she felt the "quality of the counselling isn't top notch." POs also desire counselors with experience in correctional services and, like P21, an increased cap on benefits when required to pay out of pocket for mental health support.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Many participants disclosed requiring "professional help" (P1) or "counseling" (P3) for managing the effects of their work experiences (P1). But too often, participants, like P5, felt that resources for mental health

support are lacking at their office, "which is sad." Participants in rural areas had a particularly hard time finding treatment providers, like P25, who had to travel to try to receive in-person treatment. Participants spoke about their access to mental health resources, which tended to include EAP, CISM, as well as, in some spaces, wellness resources.

EAP

Regarding EAP, participants illuminated both the ease of accessing EAP and the ineffectiveness of the resource. For instance, P3 is actively using EAP, and reported that "my daughter is seeing a counselor right now who is covered by our benefits" but also stated she believes that EAP needs more resources to be effective (e.g., "just have more EAP people, right, so that we can get it quicker"). P121, echoing many other participants, explained: "I did reach out to someone, um, through the EAP program and it was awful. The counsellor was absolutely awful." Participants talked about EAP or EFAP as "well publicized" (P2) supports, which are accessible but concerning given they are low in sessions/duration (e.g., "it's really limited and people have only a handful of sessions that are paid for and then it has to come out of pocket" (P2)). P9, who had used mental health supports, stated that to find a psychologist, "you really have to put in the time and effort and recognize what your needs are, as opposed to just what is offered. And the EAP, they were just brutal. And there was one that I did go to through the eight sessions, she was a Social Worker. Nice lady, but had no knowledge of corrections what so ever." Thus, EAP seemed palatable for personal concerns and mental health support, but was less effective for work-related stress. For instance, P19 also felt that she required supports that were informed about working in correctional settings, while P149 felt simply that "mental health training is pertinent" but that it should be "training based on our reality", including for EAP providers.

P33 described "an uphill battle" when trying to access treatment and support for a PTSD diagnosis. She found that "CSC is extremely frustrating, they promote mental health, mental health support for mental health, but if you actually try and take it, [it] is more trouble than it's worth. I had to take nine months off of work and I was, for lack of a better word, honestly harassed almost every single month by my AWY for this, for that, for paperwork." P128, echoing others, refuses to use EAP because of a lack of trust in the government and employer. This lack of trust is also tied to concerns about the confidentiality of services. P107 advocated for external supports to ensure confidentiality and to avoid stigma from coworkers. P54, echoing others, described CISM and EAP as "check boxes" placed there by the organization as lip service to mental health recognition: "they say, 'okay, do you want EAP or CISM?' and then I say 'no, no,' and then they're like 'okay great' and that's it. Like, it's two ticky boxes that they check and that's it, and then they're covering their ass and that's it. Like, so, I think that I don't know

how that can be better managed, but I think it needs to be better managed."

CISM

P12 talked about being excluded from CISM when an incident involved her client: "they offer CISM to the people that directly respond. And so they should, um, because those people need support. Um, but basically, like, they didn't invite the rest of us. Like, there were people that were [affected]. It happened in the segregation unit when segregation was open at the time". Despite having to write up the case and be involved, she was excluded from the CISM because she was not a direct responder. She explained that "I understand the first debrief is just for the direct responders, it always has been and so it should be. But there should have been [a] second debrief for the rest of us, because we were affected too. And the very fact that you didn't even invite me to the meeting, uh, tells me that you think I wasn't affected, and yet I was." P26, too, feels POs are "missed" or excluded from CISM, when their participation is indeed necessary due to the impact of the incident, stressing that they too feel liable given the person could be under their supervision. Ironically, P15 said: "I offer CISM but I'm never offered CISM [laughter]."

SUGGESTIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Asked what POs do need for mental health support, P3 explained that "we need more mental health support. We need things, like, we should have more massage, and we should be allowed to get more counseling, and all those things that are self-care. I think those should also be intertwined with where we work". The idea of onsite supports for POs was voiced by many participants. Some desired facilities for wellness, such as a quiet room or "gym" (P107). P2 explained that "the organization, about 15-20 years ago, started putting in staff wellness centres or gyms…. I think it's very important that we maintain those facilities." Others, like P108, requested a wellness fund to help support the well-being of staff, while, in a similar manner, P123 desired: "a gym membership, or contributing to the cost of a gym membership, so you can do yoga, or you can do cardio, whatever you need to do to assist with mental health. If they provided that financial component, I think that would be an assistance with mental health."

Many participants recommended having a mental health specialist on their work premises or requiring regular, mandated appointments with such a professional (e.g., P19 wants "proactive" mandated sessions with psychologists). An alternative was also put forth by P1, who explained that "they need to look at bringing in a mental health practitioner, like a psychologist, just every two or three months into the institution and just get the parole officers together as a group to talk about their stresses they're dealing with." Similarly, P15 requested: "twice a year have a teambuilding exercise." Such activities would also serve to normalize mental health treatment and discussion. With this in mind, P1 felt that

it would benefit everyone "if some experienced parole officers, like me, should speak out about the stress we're dealing with. Maybe then the parole officers with one or three or five years in will see that it's normal to be feeling this way."

Other suggestions put forth included "more mental health related workshops" (P12). P12 also echoed others in finding emails with mental health resources unhelpful, even annoying. P6 recommended a mentorship program for POs: "they should start a mentor program with parole officers that they should have someone, you know, on site. A staff member to debrief parole officers after parole board hearings…. 'Cause some of them are pretty messed up to listen to and sit there for hours through." Meanwhile, P18 asked for "vicarious trauma counselling every couple years…. I felt having that regular, annual vicarious trauma workshop where we all went, um, that it was good—nobody felt singled out, you're all learning the same information, and it really emphasized that you should be checking yourself but also checking your colleagues."

COPING STRATEGIES

Participants spoke to how they coped with the stress of their occupational work. Generally, persons were positive (e.g., "I go to the gym, and I have good friends, and I'm in a book club, and I go to counseling sometimes" (P3)). P5, for instance, does "yoga practice, meditation, and running, and having that outlet with friends and church and having those support groups and stuff", while P6 likes "to go hiking and do photography." P21, like P31, is a traveller, and copes through traveling and hobbies.

Many participants talked about social support, particularly turning to their partner and families to cope, and enjoying time with their children and spouse. Others spoke, instead, to their colleagues as supports (e.g., "I do feel like my colleagues trust that, you know, they come to my office and they need to cry or they need to talk, you know, I'm going to keep it in confidence" (P5)). P7 also talked about support from their colleagues, explaining "we've been together now for a few years and they're an excellent group. I mean, um, I can easily go in one of the officers and say, 'have you got a minute?' and vent or just talk." Having trusted colleagues, as P12 explains, is important because "if I do need to de-stress about a situation I don't have to explain the background of how corrections works. They all actually understand." P112 talks to their boss, "who's very experienced, so to talk through the stress of why dealing with a certain case or client, or things like that. And kind of talk through strategies as to, you know, what would be better ways to manage that and how to spend your time on it. And so I think that often helps, talking to others about it that are aware of that for the job." Conversely, some explained that they do not necessarily trust their colleagues thus do not turn to them in their coping. These participants instead speak to friends outside CSC. For instance, P109

turns to good friends who are not working in correctional services for her coping. They also take their dog for walks, shops, and tries "to spend time with my family with my pets and nature yoga."

Negative coping behaviours were also described, the most common being "dark humor" (P9). Some, such as P20, also talked about "self-medicating" either through marijuana or alcohol, but also explained they are "definitely not, like, an addict in any means."

IMPACT OF DIFFICULT CASES AND INTRUSION

Participants disclosed that there are "lots of cases that I can't get out of my head" (P3), which as P123 explained as quite a matter of fact: "there's always some cases that are gonna stand out that are, for whatever reason, bother you more and sometimes… I think we just get to the point where we get desensitized." Most participants had sex offenders on their caseload, and many spoke to certain cases being more trying and memorable, negatively (e.g., "it's mostly the offences against children, those are the ones that I find really, really hard, sex offences.… When I'm reading about a victim who is the same age as my daughter, you know, like that stuff really hits home and it's so hard" (P005)).

Many participants talked about specific cases that were impactful, changing their essence and creating conflict in their personal/occupational realities. P1, for instance, talked about how he

> went from being pretty open minded and liberal in my recommendations [for parole] to certainly one of the most conservative parole officers at [blinded] now. A lot of that is because I don't want to make another mistake. I don't want to recommend somebody get out of prison and be responsible for somebody else getting hurt. So yeah, certainly that incident changed how I do my job fairly dramatically. If it didn't screw me up, then I would be screwed up, so I guess…I'm glad that I find it so difficult.

P1 evidences how certain cases have changed not only his positioning, but also how he does his job. P25 provided an example of how certain cases, particularly cases related to sex offenses, creep in their impact: "the other day I was in the hardware store and I walked past the aisle where the plastic ties were.… So I see those and I think 'oh, those go in a rape kit.' Just while I'm walking down the aisle at Canadian Tire. Like, so I'm always thinking of those things." Here, work exposures are clearly impacting personal processes, confirming the effects of select cases on the PO. P21, like P30, experienced "nightmares from the files that I was reading," and P24 explained that "this line of work…carries into dreams at night."

Only a select few participants were immune from the impact of explicit cases, like P36, who said: "I think that for the most part, I can't recall a specific time reading a particular criminal profile, or police reports, or whatever, about a case that…even now I still think about. Like, 'oh that one case, that was so—you know, I can't get that out of my mind.' I don't have that. You know, I don't have that."

Participants also spoke about trying to "reconcile sometimes" working "with some men who've done some very bad things and, um, I like them. I haven't just met the boogie man, I actually helped him" (P3). Participants spoke about remarkable moments where the interconnection between seeing their client as a perpetrator and victim, and the stress of having to deliver difficult news (e.g., death of family member) to a client, particularly prior to trial or other stressful prison related experiences.

Most participants described becoming more suspicious of people and less trusting as result of their occupational experiences. P109 explained that "the kind old grandpa down the street is probably a pedophile in my mind," while P120 noted "there's a lot of lack of trust in other individuals, how I approach various situations with caution…. Like, I'm prepared for aggression on a regular basis from other people for sure."

STIGMA

Participants spoke about the stigma that continues to underpin mental health and treatment seeking. P1, for instance, spoke to how he used to see "parole officers go off on stress leave, and I always just thought that they were abusing the system and it was fake." When he himself required stress leave, he "got the impression that my employer felt that this was just me looking to get a summer off of work. I don't think that they ever believed that I needed it." P23 called mental health "very much a touchy subject" where "when people go off [work] because of whatever reason, they get judged harshly." As such, P1 also felt that the reason POs "don't reach out for help is because of that stigma. I never wanted to be one [of] the parole officers who was viewed as not mentally strong." P121 felt that when it comes to mental health, colleagues "scrutinize each other"—again indicative of the mental health stigma that remains. P128 felt that the biggest challenge to treatment access remains "breaking down the stigma."

Although participants felt that the stigma of mental health had dissipated over time, it was not eradicated; rather, according to participants like P2, the stigma had reduced in intensity, particularly given the emergence of organizations like Badge of Life and Boots on the Ground that provide mental health support to first responders. Meanwhile, P126 explained that there has been a "cultural change" where in her office "we're very open about it [mental health]."

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Work-life balance is largely affected by work intruding into personal time and life, both due to workload and the content of the work. Many participants, but not a majority, felt they had work-life balance or worked to create such balance. Some spent time trying to "draw those hard lines between work and home" (P47) to stop the intrusion of work into personal spaces. Some participants felt they benefited, despite the challenges of COVID-19, by being able to work from home. These participants felt their work life balance improved, as they were able to spend more time with family and friends despite being essential service providers. For instance, P1 said that he hoped to continue to have "the opportunity going forward to work even just two or three days a week from home. I think that will go a long way in in giving me a break from the actual offenders." He also noted, however, that "we may have been working from home, but all of us were probably working longer hours."

Conversely, some participants, like P9, described challenges tied to working from home, explaining that "working at home right now…it contaminates your home." Likewise, P20 explained that "there's no disconnect anymore…. Whereas before I could leave my office and I could kind of like de-stress on my drive home. Now it's just, like, continuous, it's always a part of my life." P20 has lost her decompression time on the drive between work and home, which continues the seep of work into personal spaces. P33 explained that, particularly with COVID-19, "my work is bleeding into my home," while P50 said "it is really tough to get some time to be productive when I'm working from home even when my spouse, he's on parental, when he's at home but the kids they don't understand that mommy's working and can't be disturbed." These participants speak to hampered work-life balance when working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, P116 explained that she had "no separation between work at home and found herself working "at any time…. I'm just going to log on to work from like 10 [PM] till 1 in the morning."

CONCLUSION

In this section, we examined the potential impacts of parole work on participants' mental health and well-being. Many participants described parole work as emotionally and physically demanding. Being exposed to challenging and difficult materials was experienced a source of vicarious trauma for many POs. While many participants discussed work-related stressors resulting from various operational and organizational aspects of their work, some POs felt so affected that they worried about burnout and other mental health consequences. Our data show how POs seek to find strategies that help them disconnect from their work and restore their mental energy, such as spending time with loved ones, or engaging in a variety of self-care activity (e.g., yoga, spending time outdoors). Participants also relied on trusted colleagues as a source of

support. Despite the potential effects of parole work on POs' mental health, many felt mental health needs were still laden with stigma, and they worried about the potential negative repercussions to their work and reputation that mental health concerns could bring. To summarize, mental health was a salient issue in discussions with POs.

The Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 continues to have significant impacts on the work of POs, both in institutional and community settings, which were discussed regularly in interviews. In this section, we discuss five themes relating to the COVID-19 pandemic that emerged from interviews: 1) changing workloads, routines, and the erosion of work-home boundaries; 2) decarceration; 3) new forms of risk, uncertainty, and challenge; and 4) navigating the supervision and support or prisoners/ parolees.

Our findings on COVID-19 and parole work should be understood within the context in which data collection occurred. We conducted interviews with POs between August and October 2020, the time period after Canada's "first wave" of COVID-19 infections, which peaked at close to 2,760 new cases per day nationwide in early May (CBC News, 2021). Data collection ended as cases were beginning to climb toward a much more significant "second wave," which ultimately peaked in January, 2021. As such, our data are limited, given in discussing the impact of COVID-19 on their work and workplaces, participants were reflecting on the initial impact of the pandemic, without knowledge of the extent of the increased rates of transmission given the immergence of variants that would eventually occur. Nonetheless, they provide insight into the experiences of POs who, in a time of great upheaval and uncertainty, continued to perform their duties as essential workers.

CHANGING WORKLOADS, ROUTINES, AND THE EROSION OF WORK-HOME BOUNDARIES

Participants consistently described COVID-19 as having caused upheaval to their daily work routines. However, variation in the nature of these changes existed, not only between CPOs and IPOs, but also between job sites depending on factors such as transmission rates in the local community, provincial regulations, or decision-making by immediate managers. Further, pre-existing differences between IPO and CPO work affected how these jobs changed in the early stages of the pandemic. That said, both groups faced significant changes to their occupational routines and workloads.

Prior to the pandemic, IPOs were typically expected to be on-site at the institution every work day, while CPOs, who travel to meet parolees and their close contacts in addition to working out of a parole office, worked in in multiple spaces.[3] With the onset of the

[3] Exceptions existed in specialized roles. Prior to the pandemic, IPOs working in intake assessment units were typically allowed greater flexibility for telework than other IPOs. Meanwhile, CPOs working at Community Correctional Centres were required to work on-site before and during the pandemic, with no option for telework.

pandemic, CSC sought to minimize the flow of people in and out of workplaces, most notably correctional institutions, due to concerns raised by researchers and health professionals about elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission in congregate settings (e.g., Barnert et al., 2020; Kinner et al., 2020; Ricciardelli et al., 2021). As a result, access to both parole offices and correctional institutions was reduced and most POs were placed on a rotating schedule involving on-site and telework (e.g, "we were told to go down to 30 percent of our case management staff in on any given weekday, so we developed a schedule where we working [on-site] a maximum of two days a week" (P2)).

The blend of on-site work and telework had mixed impacts on the workload of POs. For some, working from home brought about certain benefits, such as greater flexibility, which enabled them to complete their work more efficiently. Certain tasks, most notably report writing, were easier to focus on away from participants' chaotic and busy work environments. For example, P110, an IPO, stated that at home "there's less interruptions…. You might only get one report done at work, 'cause you've got a meeting or you're on the phone or an inmate comes to see you, whereas I might get two or three reports done when I'm at home 'cause I've got nothing distracting me." P46, a CPO, similarly declared that "having even two days a week at home [to] just focus on the reports and case records and all the typing that you can't get done…is invaluable right now" adding that "in the office you're constantly being interrupted."

Despite some perceived benefits of telework for completing specific tasks, participants discussed a range of stressors as a result of working from home, affecting both their home life and their occupational responsibilities. For example, parents of young children noted the challenges of juggling work responsibilities with childminding at a time of school and daycare closures, which were exacerbated by the "sensitive" (P5) nature of parole work. P22 explained:

> We've got our kids at home, so that's a dynamic that makes it interesting when you're…talking to sex offenders, and about violence, and all sorts of things that they shouldn't know anything about. So there's kind of a boundary thing there, which, you know, in this line of work boundaries are important.

The blurring of home and work life was expressed by many participants who felt their ability to separate their professional and personal lives had suffered as a result of spending the majority of their time at home:

> For me, being in the office, that's my line, [that's how] I separate my work from my home…. Having to work from home, and having my children here while I have to talk a guy in from the ledge, for me that bleeds into my home life. And I don't particularly like that…. I mean, some of the offenders on my

> caseload know I have children and I don't have any concerns with that; other offenders on my caseload don't know, and I don't want them to know. But I can't keep that [boundary]. My work is bleeding into my home…. I don't particularly like it because my house, my family, my children is my safe zone, and I don't feel like I have it right now. (P33)

These statements speak to the mental health toll that telework placed on some CPOs, and the erosion of boundaries POs had constructed to protect their work-life balances and to prevent the "bleeding" of occupational stress into their home lives.

Telework also created workload challenges for POs. P132, for example, found that, with her access to her office restricted, completing paperwork in a timely manner was a source of stress: "when you're in the office four times a month, you got to rush to get all the paperwork done [because]… it has to be done in the office. So I think that is very challenging." Other participants faced technological challenges as they transitioned to telework. P75 explained that in their region, to not to prevent the electronic system from being overloaded, "we were only allowed [remote] access to our…casework records and everything…from 7:00 AM till 9:00 AM… We couldn't do our work in that time." Such stressors were expressed by POs in terms that suggested increased feelings of chaos and disorganization, making it difficult to stay on top of one's tasks.

In addition to challenges resulting from telework, staffing levels were identified as a major source of stress by many participants. There was reduced numbers of IPOs on-site at a given time, and program officers—who are responsible for providing prisoners with social, educational, occupational, and recreational programs that are intended to contribute to their overall correctional plan—were ordered to stay home. In these circumstances, IPOs in particular felt that they had to shoulder increased responsibilities with inadequate resources or knowledge. For example, P40 explained:

> I would say the staff [drove the increase in workload]. Like a lot of staff going home. If I take, for example, the correctional programs officers being sent home: a lot of the times, the guys will be in programs and we'll be able to kind of manage their stressors throughout the interventions that are done with programs. So, then a lot of the stuff that maybe usually a program officer would have dealt with [prior to COVID-19], then the parole officers had to deal with…. I found that parole officers, at our site anyways, tend to be kind of like the dumping ground.

In addition to navigating a high workload from home (often while caring for children and others), IPOs faced added responsibilities and challenges when they worked in the institution. For example, P104 explained that staff rotations meant that IPOs on-site had to

work with prisoners who were not usually on their caseload, and thus handle cases they felt unfamiliar with:

> When you go in on any given day, there's one team of you there, so whatever has to be done, has to be done. It probably isn't your case, so you have all this stuff that needs to be done, but you don't really know the case. So you're kind of scrambling trying to figure things out, trying to figure out whatever needs to be done. And we all do our best to kind of help each other out, but it's just it's pure chaos every day.

As participants demonstrate, imposed telework had mixed impacts on POs. For some, it provided greater flexibility and focus, and relieved stress. For others, it eroded the boundaries between their work and home lives, created new challenges to completing their workloads, or made their workday highly chaotic. Ultimately, beyond the pandemic, the option to occasionally telework appears likely to decrease the stress of many POs.

DECARCERATION

Within the first month of the pandemic, Canada's Minister of Public Safety requested that CSC and Parole Board of Canada "consider early release for some federal inmates to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 behind bars" (Harris, 2021, para. 1)—a process known as "decarceration", otherwise defined as "alternatives to incarceration, such as serving sentences in the community rather than in prison, as well as the premature conclusion of a criminal sentence, and the aggregate reduction in the prison population" (Ricciardelli et al., 2021, p. 495). The calls for decarceration in Canada's federal system mirrored those in other correctional jurisdictions, which had a particular concern for prisoners advanced in age, with underlying health conditions, or with other physical vulnerabilities (Burki, 2020). However, in the Canadian federal system, COVID-19 had minimal impacts on decarceration (Parole Board of Canada, 2021; Ricciardelli et al., 2021).

Many participants talked about the effects of CSC's decarceration efforts on their workloads and how this created new stressors and frustrations. Both IPOs and CPOs felt their work was affected by calls for decarceration. Though the specific changes to their work and resulting challenges varied, both groups felt frustration about what they perceived as a top-down push for decarceration that was neither coordinated nor inclusive of the working realities of POs during these trying times.

IPOs specifically noticed a higher-than-usual volume of applications for release from prisoners. Although most applications were unlikely to be supported by the IPO or granted by the Parole Board of Canada, IPOs were still required to review and work through prisoners' requests which resulted in increased workloads and paperwork. Particularly time consuming

were "parole by exception" applications, a rare form of early release intended for prisoners "who are terminally ill or whose physical or mental health is likely to suffer damage if the offender continues to be held in confinement" (Parole Board of Canada, 2021), as many IPOs had little or no prior experience with these applications. P44 describes the challenge with these applications as follows:

> Parole by exception is not something that I dealt with before, so that was an extra, application with extra work and then it was very time sensitive as well. And so you're doing everything. Like, we have our [normal] timeframe set out by policy, and then all of a sudden parole by exception comes along and all those timeframes go out the window and everything needs to be done as soon as possible. And, like I said, I had guys that we had a plan, as far as when they would apply for parole, but they jumped the gun [and] applied earlier because of COVID…. The work would have been coming one way or another, but it came earlier than expected.

Parole requests did not just add to POs' workload; they also created new forms of emotional labour and concerns for prisoners' well-being. Given that the overwhelming majority of applications for release were not successful, IPOs voiced great concern for prisoners whose hopes were clearly raised by the possibility of being paroled sooner than expected, but were unlikely to be granted release. Thus, IPOs felt the responsibility of balancing requests and real hope with disappointment and hurt. P44 illustrated the impact of decarceration discourse and policies on prisoners:

> I had several inmates put in [for parole]. I actually have a guy that I've been dealing with right now, I was talking to yesterday. He readily admits he got caught up in this sweeping emotion in the inmate population that you should try and get parole, [that] with COVID they'll let you out, they'll let you out. And he didn't intend on applying for parole that quickly but he kind of got swept up in the emotion at the time and he put it in. So I've had a few guys like that, I had one guy apply for parole by exception, so I had to do that paper work as well. I mean, today, none of them have been successful.

Parole by exception requests also forced IPOs to make risk assessments that they felt were beyond their remit, such as weighing prisoners' risk to public safety against their health risks due to COVID-19—a difficult task, as P3 explained:

> Information we got about guys who are high risk though was really sketchy and unclear. Again, we were sort of told 'so these are the guys on your caseload that are high risk, so you can take a look at them perhaps for a different type of release,' but we weren't told what's

> wrong with them. So I don't know, does he have asthma? Or does he have leukemia? Or, I just don't know?… Even when the information to given to me I'm still like 'I don't know, does that mean, like how high a risk is he?' Is he a is he a such a high risk for death that it overshadows his risk to hurt someone if I support [his exceptional release]?… It's, like, their health, their future, as well as public safety.

CPOs, too, experienced frustration due to what they perceived as a disconnect between broader calls for decarceration and the realities of community supervision, particularly as requests for early release were rarely successful. P57, a parole supervisor, stated: "It kind of seems like they've been rushed and without really planning. Like, we had to relocate one [parolee], for example, because the release plan wasn't well structured…. So my experience hasn't been positive with early or other forms of release due to COVID." P82, a CPO, felt that decarceration policies conflicted with the CPOs' professional judgements about the well-being and safety of released prisoners and the community: "management directives [are to] get these guys out, where the parole officers are saying but we still need to do a proper risk assessment."

POs' workload was affected by decarceration, adding to the already stressful working conditions created by the pandemic. IPOs felt stressed as they had to accommodate an unusually high number of applications for exceptional release and process them within a tight timeframe, while making risk assessments that they did not feel qualified to determine. Further, despite the impression of some prisoners that COVID-19 would increase their likelihood to attain early release, the calls for decarceration in federal correctional institutions had minimal impact on the number of exceptional releases, leaving IPOs frustrated at spending time on these largely unfruitful applications and applicants managing new forms of harm—that of rejection and dashed hope. For CPOs, who were concerned about the supervision and supports of released prisoners, decarceration efforts felt largely disorganized and disconnected from their own working realities and the supervision and reentry supports available in the community, creating added frustration and concern regarding their own ability to perform their job duties of supervision, risk assessment, and support.

NEW FORMS OF RISK, UNCERTAINTY, AND CHALLENGE

While many POs had to transition to partially or fully working from home, most IPOs continued to work part-time within prison institutions where the spatial dimension of COVID-19 risk produced new and added stressors. IPOs expressed concern, for example, about inadequate safety protocols inside institutions, which left them feeling vulnerable to exposure to COVID-19 in the first wave of the pandemic. Specific complaints included a lack of materials, such as masks,

PPE, or disinfecting wipes (e.g., "I wanted to get every parole officer issued a couple of extra masks and a thing of wipes…and I couldn't get it. I was just told no" (P3)).

Due to institutional efforts to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission, IPOs had to adapt the spaces of their face-to-face meetings with prisoners to accommodate physical distancing measures, and worried whether spaces were disinfected or if the prisoners were maintaining hygiene standards appropriate for COVID-19. Given limited suitable meeting spaces within many prisons, IPOs voiced concern about sharing larger meeting spaces with other staff, raising concern about the cleanliness and risks of transmission of these heavily used rooms. COVID-19 made physical spaces in prison take on an additional risk dimension (i.e., that of contagion within heavily shared, poorly ventilated spaces) while IPOs sought to carry out their occupational duties. What participants felt were hastily-implemented safety protocols, such as not using normal offices for meetings, created new health risks and stressors, in addition to making other job duties more challenging. For example, many participants described their meetings with prisoners being rushed, due to staff demand for available interview space, or occurring in spaces that were not conducive to meaningful conversation. IPOs attempting to hold telephone meetings while working off-site had to consider the effects of these new spatial arrangements in prison on the prisoners on their caseload who lost access to private space to speak on the telephone with their IPO:

> Not all sites are set up for private conversation. Like, [it is a] difficulty if you need to talk about sex offences for offenders. Many of my offenders [on my caseload] are using a telephone that is right outside the barrier, like, right off the range where the inmates live and the inmates are doing their laundry. They're doing a bunch of laundry, cooking, taking showers, [and] they're within earshot. So my sex offenders, I'm not fully able to get to the bottom of it, 'cause I'll ask a question [and] he has to say 'yes' [or] 'no' [to maintain privacy]. So I'm not going to get a real qualitative [answer] out of the offender. (P79)

Spatial restrictions, therefore, had the potential to impact IPOs' ability to provide meaningful support to their clients and even put their clients at risks, forcing IPOs to try to mitigate the increased risk to their client posed by their inability to speak to their IPOs in a private, confidential manner (see also Ricciardelli and Moir, 2013; Ricciardelli and Spencer, 2017).

Finally, IPOs generally expressed concerns about how the behaviour of both prisoners and staff created additional risks while they were on-site. P12, for example, worried about prisoners "walking around, no masks, you know, hugging guys and fist bumping them, and acting like it's normal" and added: "I find that majority of the inmates are acting like it's still just the pandemic has not happened.

Perceived health risks also extended to IPOs' coworkers. P40 voiced concern that "there's been a lot of instances where correctional officers aren't wearing them or inmates are coming out for interviews and they don't have them. So it's constantly the need to be like 'hey, where's your mask? You need to put your mask on.'" P40 went on to explain how reminding correctional officers to put on their mask became a constant struggle that felt uncomfortable as "we're not on the same level either, so it makes for awkward conversations". P40 identified self-advocacy as a key risk mitigation strategy that enabled her to assert some level of control over the risks posed by COVID-19.

For CPOs, too, changes to the spatial arrangement of their work as a result of COVID-19 produced new challenges and stressors. As a result of efforts to reduce in-person meetings with parolees, CPOs were permitted to conduct some of their meetings remotely, (e.g., "we are able to do telephone interviews up to 50% of their frequency of contact, so that's been helpful for sure" (P132)). Further, CPOs were permitted to adapt how they conducted visits to the homes of parolees to minimize the risk of transmission, which involved strategies like "having the offender come out on their step with [their] telephone while you visually see them…. I thought all that actually was handled quite well" (P5). These participants described positively the operational changes made by CSC to both minimize the risk to CPOs while still permitting them to conduct some form of in-person meeting. Working in the community enabled CPOs to find some creative solutions, like P5 described, to keep themselves and their clients safe, while still performing their supervision duties.

Other participants, however, found meeting with parolees during the pandemic to be an additional source of stress, particularly if they supervised caseloads over a large rural/remote area. P24 expressed frustration that the closure of her parole office meant she had to undertake additional travel:

> The unspoken expectation is the accountability now falls on the parole officer I find [to travel to the parolee]…. You can't just say 'come to my office and see me at this time,' and if they don't come then you can reschedule them…. Now we're driving to their residence or place of employment over and over again…. It just makes it more difficult for the scheduling and juggling.

Together, the narratives of IPOs and CPOs show how changes to the spaces and environments in which POs work affected their safety and perceptions of risk and vulnerability. For IPOs working in prison, fear of transmission and health risks as a result of working in closed, poorly-ventilated spaces dominated their concerns. CPOs talked about how they adapted their modes of meeting with parolees, though other spatial changes, such as closing of parole offices, increased

their workload and resulted in new challenges that, as we go on to discuss, also affected their ability to perform their supervision and support duties.

NAVIGATING SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

Parole work is marked by a tension between the supervision and support of parolees, and the wide-ranging effects of lockdowns and other pandemic-related public health measures were felt acutely by POs who struggled to balance these twin demands.

Many CPO participants felt that their ability to make confident assessments of parolees' behaviour was compromised by the limits placed on in-person meetings, particularly visits to the homes of parolees. P82 stated that "because we're not allowed to go into homes [and] it's harder to assess potential risk." P129 similarly noted that "seeing the home of the parolee can make us know how he is in his head.… So, I feel like we were kind of missing a bit of information by not going there." Others lamented the inability to observe parolees' bodily cues: "we can't see their facial reactions, [so] we don't really know for sure what's going on" (P132)). As these participants make clear, despite finding some creative ways to see parolees in a safe environment, many CPOs consider in-person interactions to be vital to their effective supervision of parolees, and thus felt the effects of reduced access to and interaction with parolees. P22 explained the challenges of supervision in the absence of unimpeded face-to-face contact when sharing that:

> [There is a] huge assessment piece being missed when we do our community assessments.… You missed the whole component of seeing people in their natural environment, where they are more likely to maybe share.… It also makes it difficult to have certain conversations when you're standing outside on the street corner. You're not really talking about how they're managing their conditions and, you know, [with] sex offenders how they are managing their urges and whatnot.

These sentiments were echoed by P96, who missed "that extra element of being able to meet them in their home…and having those open conversations." She added that such visits were "crucial to building rapport and getting a sense of how well they're doing."

IPOs similarly recognized that face-to-face interaction with prisoners were necessary for effective case management. Working from home, some felt, had made meeting the prisoners on their caseload more challenging. Meetings done by phone or, irregularly, in-person, affected IPOs' ability to monitor their clients' adherence to their correctional plans and assess their risks and needs—moreover, it reduced their ability to be there for their clients. P28, for example, described herself as "somebody that likes that one-on-one intervention with the offenders" and added:

"I don't feel comfortable writing reports that essentially control somebody else's life without them having the ability to provide input that I can take into consideration….. It helps in rapport building, and that simultaneously helps in public safety and in some way shape or form cause they do build trust a lot."

The barriers to engagement created by the pandemic were not merely inconveniences for IPOs—they also had potential consequences for prisoners. IPOs' recommendations influence each prisoner on their caseload's likelihood of earning parole, receiving a transfer to a lower security level, or accessing programs. As such, the challenges faced by IPOs during the pandemic also had potentially damaging implications for the prisoners on their caseloads which created additional stress for IPOs who voiced concern for their clients' mental and physical well-being.

Both CPOs and IPOs expressed genuine concern about the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical health of their clients, who were enduring greater-than-normal restrictions (including lengthy lockdowns) and uncertainty or fear about potential exposure to COVID-19. P82, a CPO, explained the potentially damaging effects on parolees who could not access their usual community supports:

> The resources aren't available. Our programs weren't happening for a while. And even now program is only happening over the phone, so it's very hard to tell if that's even effective or not…. There's a lot of barriers, and then they are stuck at the halfway house you know for days on end, and that's not mentally healthy for anyone.

P84, a CPO, described an example of how POs in the community were limited in the support that they could provide to parolees, a situation that could be particularly damaging for those who relied on their PO for support and guidance:

> [Some parolees] have developed a really strong rapport with us, and don't always have a good strong family support…. We are their first line of problem solving. So when the money starts running short, when they lose their jobs because of COVID, when they start to experience health concerns, when they can't get to the store to get their groceries, for some of our offenders we're the ones they call. So we're not only their parole officer in some cases we're their primary source of support.

As P84's statement demonstrates, the support role played by CPOs could be exaggerated during the pandemic, when socially vulnerable parolees lacked their usual resources. Several CPOs linked these challenging pandemic-related circumstances to instances in which parolees on their caseload breached their release conditions (e.g., "I think the offenders that have breached [are] because of the stress of COVID" (P82)). For CPOs with a genuine

concern for the well-being of the people on their caseload, their clients' increased vulnerability and risk of breaches added an additional layer of difficulty to their jobs with possible implications for their own well-being.

CONCLUSION

In this section, we discussed how COVID-19 has impacted and changed the daily work of POs and their ability to supervise and provide support to clients. Our data show that telework created some benefits for POs, but also some additional stressors. Participants talked about an erosion of work-life boundaries. Others were worried about their reduced ability to provide good supervision and support to clients in the absence of face-to-face interactions. Many noted an increase in workload. Many participants also discussed what they felt was a gap between "top down" decarceration policies and their experiences on the "front lines." Applications for exceptional release increased during the early months of the pandemic, as interviewees explained, increased significantly, yet, most of these applications were not successful,—a frustrating reality for both prisoners and POs. The reduced ability to provide meaningful support to clients during the pandemic was another source of concern that also made participants worried about the implications of decarceration. Both CPOs and IPOs were concerned about how the lack of in-person support, coupled with the disappearance of other support systems in the community, affected their clients' well-being and legal future.

Recommendations

Interviews with POs reveal parole work is rewarding and meaningful, at the same as it is emotionally demanding and challenging. Interviewees valued the job variety of parole, which made their work interesting and stimulating. Interviewees gained satisfaction and positive feelings from providing support to clients and bearing witness to people changing in positive prosocial ways (Anderson, 2016). The human aspect of parole work was experienced as the most rewarding aspect of their work, and witnessing people's change directly led to enhanced feelings of satisfaction, fulfillment, and confidence. Moreover, while the COVID-19 pandemic is an exceptional event, it nonetheless provides an opportunity to reflect on how parole work could be done differently, to the benefit of POs and those the prisoners/parolees they supervise. In light of these findings, we make the following recommendations:

WORKLOAD AND JOB TASKS

1. Reduced caseloads: POs struggle to manage their caseloads or FOC requirements and, in this sense, to meet the needs of their already vulnerable and marginalized clients. A reduction in caseloads would help provide POs with the resources and time necessary to tend to their client needs in a holistic and comprehensive manner. This, our data suggest, could also improve job satisfaction, as POs gain reward and fulfillment from working directly with clients.

2. Hire Additional Determinate POs: The recommendation to reduce POs' caseloads and FOC requirements is only possible if greater number of POs are hired. As such, we recommend that CSC consider hiring additional POs to increase the number of POs at each correctional institution, parole office, and CCC. Further, CSC should review whether POs on indeterminate positions can be made permanent, which would increase the pool of determinate POs and reduce PO stress and operational disruption created by staff turnover.

3. Hire Additional Dedicated Administrative Support Staff: Providing POs with consistent clerical support will enable them to spend less time on paperwork and administrative duties. In turn, this will allow them to focus more on supporting and supervising clients and producing informed risk assessments and recommendations. Recognizing that it may not be practical to assign additional clerical staff to each worksite, CSC should consider having administrative staff work remotely to support multiple sites and invest in the technological infrastructure this arrangement would require.

4. Clearly Delineate the Responsibilities of Each Member of a Case Management Team: In response to POs' feeling of being a "catch-all," CSC should conduct an exhaustive review of all responsibilities associated with case management and produce a clear plan that delineates specific responsibilities for each team member.

JOB SATISFACTION

1. Enhance structures and resources that encourage commitment to rehabilitation and human contact: Management and leadership should explore ways to enhance POs' ability to devote focused time to client interaction. In addition to reduced caseloads (see Workload and Job Tasks), this could include regularly surveying and consulting POs to gain a better sense of needs, desires for enhanced training, or ways to further strengthen the skills and aspects of parole work they particularly value and enjoy (e.g., report writing).

2. Review salary scales for POs: POs expressed concern about the pay they received when compared to other jobs in correctional services that require their credentials (i.e., a degree). POs' salaries (including salary increments) should be reviewed to ensure they match POs' level of education and the occupational responsibility associated with parole work.

3. Showing recognition for "good" work: Our data show POs would value positive recognition and affirmation from their employer for their work. Management and leadership should find creative and meaningful ways to provide positive affirmation to officers to show them that their work is valued and respected.

4. Enhance opportunities for collegial support and team building: Interviewees enjoyed the company of their colleagues, and felt supported by their peers. Efforts to increase interaction and support between POs in both formal ways (e.g., peer-mentoring, team work) and informal ways (e.g., socializing, opportunities to reflect together on parole work and its effect on people's health and well-being) are important aspects of POs' well-being and job satisfaction.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND SUPPORT

1. Formalized and Regular Communication Between POs and Upper Management: To address the feeling that POs are underappreciated and under-supported, CSC should formalize opportunities for regular communication between PO representatives and upper management. This step will reduce the need for middle managers to represent PO concerns to their supervisors and avoid the problem of POs' communication not moving "up the chain," thus helping to ensure that upper management is regularly appraised of POs' ongoing challenges and concerns. Further, this process will provide a channel for upper management to directly explain policy changes to POs, enabling POs to seek clarification and better understand the rationale for changes.

2. Managerial Training: CSC should implement mandatory interpersonal and trauma informed training for new managers (and all POs), and require existing managers to refresh this training every few years. Further, CSC should ensure that new managers receive comprehensive training on the responsibilities and contributions of both intervention and security staff, which may help improve awareness and appreciation of POs' roles and workloads. POs who felt supported by management were more content in their occupational work, which also improves job performance.

3. Improved PO Training Opportunities: CSC should commit funding to improve the frequency, variety, and quality of PO training opportunities. POs expressed a need for more regular opportunities to complete relevant training and a wider variety of training options available. In terms of variety, POs specifically mentioned wanting training on topics such as exposure to PPTE (including vicarious trauma), working with specific populations of prisoners/parolees (e.g., those convicted of sex offences or fraud), cultural awareness, and new CSC policies. POs also desire training that brings them into interaction with other correctional professionals (including POs from other work sites) or that is delivered by experts. Overall, providing desirable and relevant training will help address POs concerns that CSC does not adequately support their work.

MENTAL HEALTH

1. Mental Health Treatment and Services: POs appear to struggle with mental health needs, either through direct exposures to physical violence/aggression or from vicarious trauma. We recommend direct access to mental health treatment and services. This includes ensuring EAP or other mental health providers are trained or aware of correctional service work, increasing caps on benefits to support more mental health sessions for those experiencing compromised mental health, and direct access to a mental health professional who can provided immediate support for those with such needs after trying work experiences. Moreover, we also recommend annual

mandated "check-ins" with a mental health provider to help reduce the stigma of accessing mental health support and to help ensure the PO workforce is in good health.

2. Lack of Backfill: POs report that when a colleague is on leave or absent there is no backfill, which increases their occupational responsibilities and makes return to work more challenging for the impacted officer. We recommend backfilling positions of persons on leave to help manage caseloads and assist with the completion of occupational responsibilities.

3. Sense of Responsibility for Client Actions: POs experienced much psychological distress when their clients acted in ways that were antisocial, aggressive, or harmful to others. Training is needed to remind POs that they cannot always predict client behaviours and support is required for POs suffering due to the actions of their clients.

4. Support for Hypervigilance: Given parole work results in intrusion of casefiles into daily life and hypervigilance at and outside of work, support is necessary for POs who need to learn to manage the PPTE exposure tied to their occupational work and the impacts on their lived experiences.

5. Working Alone in the Community: Given the potential risk to POs working alone in the community, a pairing of officers when visiting high-risk clients, such that each PO has "back up," is recommended.

6. Inclusion in CISM: POs, although not always directly impacted by incidents or PPTE, should be included in CISMs, particularly in cases concerning those on their caseloads. They are team members in correctional services and their current exclusion fails to support their mental health needs.

7. Creation of a Well-being Space on Site: POs described that having a gym (if currently not present) or quiet room onsite would be helpful for decompression and managing their well-being. Although unlikely due to space constraints and resource challenges, we recommend the development of an onsite wellness space that includes capacity for physical exercise. We also recommend this space be staffed by a mental health specialist well versed in correctional work who can provide needed support in a timely and immediate fashion.

8. Team-building Exercises and Mental Health Training: Team-building exercises are recommended to support the well-being of POs and to help facilitate supports between colleagues. There is also a need for greater mental health training, which will also help to reduce the stigma of mental health and treatment seeking. We caveat that training should be tailored to those in correctional services and should include strategies that are feasible and responsive to PPTE exposure.

9. Efforts to Reduce Mental Health Stigma, including that tied to Taking Leave: Efforts here can include training, team-building exercises, and mandated psychological assessments annually, as previously noted. Efforts to increase discussion around mental health may also be effective in stigma reduction.

COVID-19

1. Flexibility in Work Arrangements: Telework was associated with various benefits, including increased productivity and focus on certain tasks. At the same time, face-to-face interactions are essential to good parole work. We recommend that efforts be made to create work arrangements that, where possible, enable greater flexibility during the pandemic and long-term. We recommend an exploration of hybrid work arrangements where POs are able to conduct certain aspects of their work from home and others in the institution/community.

2. Health Risk Mitigation: Our findings stress the importance of clear and direct communication from management about COVID-19 health and safety protocols. We recommend explicit instructions for COVID-19 protocols that ensure consistent and adequate adherence by all employees. We recommend management review established safety protocols to build a resilient parole system and organization for future public health crises.

3. Ensuring Direct Client Contact: Practices need to be implemented that ensure POs are able to maintain their contact with clients on their caseload, while ensuring the health and well-being of all. We suggest exploring a hybrid (e.g., work from home part-time) model (see point 1) and reviewing continuously safety protocols to help ensure meaningful face-to-face and safe interactions between POs and clients.

4. Decarceration: We recommend enhanced education for POs on criteria determining eligibility for exceptional release or parole. Such clarification and education could help manage expectations among prisoners regarding their eligibility as well as the workloads of POs. Additionally, decarceration efforts necessitate greater cooperation with frontline services and community supports to ensure that people who are released early are still provided with the necessary supervision and treatment supports in the community. We recommend enhanced cooperation between policy makers, management, and frontline POs to ensure decarceration policies are responsive to the realities of POs and clients returning to the community.

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Appendix 1: Memorial University of Newfoundland REB Study Approval

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20201495-AR**
Approval Period:	February 20, 2020 – February 28, 2021
Funding Source:	Union of Safety and Justice Employees Title – *USJE members: Understanding their health and wellbeing* [RGCS # 20200929]
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Rosemary Ricciardelli Department of Sociology
Title of Project:	*Occupational Stress among Canadian Parole Officers (employed by Correctional Services Canada)*

February 20, 2020

Dr. Rosemary Ricciardelli
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Dr. Ricciardelli:

Thank you for your submission to the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR), seeking ethical clearance for your research project. The Committee appreciates the care and diligence with which you prepared your application. However, the recruitment email should be revised to state that officers are being asked to participate in a face-to-face **or telephone** interview.

The project is consistent with the guidelines of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (TCPS2). *Full ethics clearance* is granted for one year from the date of this letter. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2* (2014). Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project.

The *TCPS2* **requires** that you submit an Annual Update to ICEHR before February 28, 2021. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide an annual update with a brief final summary and your file will be closed. If you need to make changes during the project which may raise ethical concerns, you must submit an Amendment Request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration. If funding is obtained subsequent to ethics approval, you must submit a Funding and/or Partner Change Request to ICEHR so that this ethics clearance can be linked to your award. All post-approval event forms noted above must be submitted by selecting the ***Applications: Post-Review*** link on your Researcher Portal homepage. We wish you continued success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Russell J. Adams, Ph.D.
Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research
Professor of Psychology and Pediatrics
Faculties of Science and Medicine

RA/th

copy: Director, Research Grant and Contract Services

Appendix 2: List of Research Outputs

(as of January, 2021)

PUBLISHED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Norman, M., & Ricciardelli, R. (2021). "It's Pure Chaos Every Day": COVID-19 and the Work Canadian Federal Institutional Parole Officers. *European Journal of Probation*. DOI: 10.1177/20662203211056487.

Norman, M., Maier, K., & Ricciardelli, R. (accepted). "We Have a Lot of Responsibilities, and I Think That Gets Overlooked": Canadian Federal Parole Officers' Experiences of Occupational Stress. *Journal of Community Corrections*.

Norman, M., Ricciardelli, R., & Maier, K. (accepted). "In This Line of Work, Boundaries Are Important": Occupational Stress and the Well-being of Community Parole Officers During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*.

JOURNAL ARTICLES UNDER REVIEW

Maier, K., Ricciardelli, R., & Norman, M. "I've Had Cases That Have Gone in the Wrong Direction and That Has Affected Me": A Qualitative Examination of Decision-Making, Liminality, and the Emotional Aspects of Parole Work." *Law & Social Inquiry*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Maier, K., Ricciardelli, R., Norman, M. (2022). "You're Kind of Walking into Situations Where You Just Really Don't Know How It's Going to Go Down": Risk, Space, and the Work of Canadian Federal Parole Officers." Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, Lisbon, Portugal, July 13-16.

Maier, K., Ricciardelli, R., & Norman, M. (2021). Support Versus Supervision: Unpacking the Tensions in Community Supervision. 21st Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology, [online], September 8-10.

Norman, M. & Ricciardelli, R. (2021). The Gendered Nature of Parole Work: How Female and Male Canadian Federal Parole Officers Experience Occupational Stressors and Navigate Risk. Annual Conference of the Canadian Sociological Association, University of Alberta [online], May 31-June 4.

Norman, M. & Ricciardelli, R. (2021). "It's Been Really Stressful Trying to Figure Out 'What the Hell am I Supposed to be Doing?'": The Impacts of COVID-19 on the Work of Canadian Federal Institutional Parole Officers. Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, [online], May 27-30.

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