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Resilience of Former Offenders Released from a Halfway House

Tasha Andrea Pritchett
Walden University

Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

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Tasha Andrea Pritchett

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Dr. Eric Hickey, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty
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Walden University
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Abstract

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MSW, University of Washington, 2009

BS, University of Washington, 2005

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Forensic Psychology

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Abstract

Former offenders confront a myriad of obstacles that often lead to re-offending and return to prison. Re-offending also creates financial and social burdens for taxpayers. There is some evidence that the consequences of incarceration for offenders can be buffered through resilience. Factors that promote resilience can be personal (internal) and environmental (external), and may directly or indirectly affect offenders' adaptation, well-being, and development as they transition out of prison. The purpose of the study was to explore the narratives of resilience in adult males who have transitioned from halfway houses to mainstream society. Richardson's metatheory of resilience and resiliency was used to guide the development of interview questions and analysis plan to explore offenders' resilience during their journey from incarceration to the community. A purposeful homogenous sample of six participants was recruited and interviewed. A thematic narrative analysis was used to examine shared and unique experiences of resilience in the stories they told. Three themes of resilience emerged: coping, cognitive reframe, and support. The participants described how these themes contributed to the development of internal and external resilience necessary for successfully transitioning to life outside of prison. This research contributes to positive social change by advancing knowledge and practical applications in working with former offenders who are returning to society, and future studies are encouraged to use a more diverse sample and consider prospective methods to study the emergence of resilience over time.

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Dedication

It is my genuine gratefulness and warmest regard that I dedicate this work to my fellow colleagues that work with offenders and former offenders. I would also like to dedicate this labor of love to fellow traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors to inspire and encourage them on completing such a task with dedication, persistence, and passion at a school that foster patience and understanding. Lastly, I would like to dedicate my trailblazing efforts to the Johnson/Pritchett legacy. As the first person in the family history to earn a PhD, I'm praying I'm not the last.

Acknowledgments

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I did not receive great deal of consistent support, assistance, or confidence boosters, but God!

I would first like to thank God for giving me the tenacity, commitment, and mental fortitude after my head injury to complete this task.

Secondly, I would like to thank my child, Brandon Pritchett, for always pushing me to lead by example and stay one step ahead of him because he is a very wise man. I navigated new waters for the future of our family!

Additionally, I would like to thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Susan Marcus, whose expertise was invaluable in formulating and completing this dissertation. Your insightful feedback pushed me to sharpen my thinking and successfully complete this project. I am also extremely grateful for Dr. Hickey who started me on this dissertation journey.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for not being in my life, so I could learn how to always fight, cry, scream, and kick for all that I ever wanted out of life.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Resilience is the process of healthy adaptation in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress; and has been identified as a protective factor or quality that makes recovery from trauma or adversity more likely (Durrant, 2017; Souza et al., 2015; Ttofi et al., 2016). Resilience has been examined to some extent in prison populations in these studies, although they have focused primarily on risk factors (i.e., the pathologies and hazards that make re-offending and return to prison more likely). Many researchers have called for more study of the factors and experiences like resilience that reduce recidivism (Durose et al., 2014). This study intended to add to the literature on how the experience of resilience contributed to the process of moving from prison back to civilian life. Knowing more about what contributes to the successful transition from prison to civilian life would contribute to the scientific understand of the role of resilience in the transition from prison and would contribute positively to the social welfare of these individuals, their families, and society.

The goal of this research was to hear from offenders how experiences of resilience played a role in their ability to successfully reintegrate back into the community after leaving a halfway house program. The study explored the narratives of former residents of halfway houses, which were analyzed utilizing a structural approach to examine the experience of resilience in the transition from halfway house to reintegration back into the community. In this chapter, I summarize the background literature of the study, identify the research problem, purpose, research questions and

theoretical framework. Then I discuss the significance of the study, followed by a summary of the methods and limitations.

Background of the Study

Since the inception of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (most known and referred to as the War on Drugs), incarceration rates in the United States have increased by 500% since the 1980s. Males make up over 1.3 million of the 1.4 million individuals in prison (Carson, 2015; The Sentencing Project, 2018) or 1.5 million individuals (Carson, 2016). With over 99.1% of the prison population made up of males and nearly 300,000 incarcerated in prison for drug offenses, the current study focused on men (The Sentencing Project, 2018).

The focus of the U.S. justice and rehabilitative practices is to deter crime and motivate offenders to become productive citizens, thus enhancing public safety (Datchi et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2018). Re-entry programs emerged as part of the larger strategic efforts federal and state agencies invested in to break the cycle of arrest, detention, release, and re-arrest using support services. Re-entry is used to describe offenders who return to live in the mainstream society after a period of time in prison. This transition begins in the correctional setting and continues through post release (Datchi et al., 2016).

The support services' planning and development begins during detention and continues upon release with community-based organizations, like a residential re-entry center (RRC) or halfway house. Over 90% of offenders were released from prison under some form of community care like halfway houses (Routh & Hamilton, 2015). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, it is estimated that in 2013, there were nearly 5 million

inmates released to community-based settings in the United States (James, 2015; Wong et al., 2018).

Across the country, government agencies and non-profit organizations operate a wide variety of programs designed to improve prisoner re-entry outcomes (Doleac, 2018). Research on offender programs has shown that offenders who are released to the halfway house for re-entry and reintegration back into the community are less likely to re-offend than those released directly to the streets (Routh & Hamilton, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). People exiting jail and prison face a broad array of challenges that make it difficult to build a stable life and avoid criminal activity upon release, without support. On average, they have limited education and work experience, high rates of mental illness and emotional trauma, and high rates of substance abuse (Doleac, 2016, 2018). In addition, many have accumulated substantial court debt and child support arrears, both of which tax legal income and may also result in the suspension of their driver's license, if their license had not already expired (Ciolfi et al., 2016). Existing re-entry programs aim to address one or more of these challenges.

Re-entry options, like a halfway house, have provided offenders supports like pro-social skills training, assistance with finding employment, drug testing, access to physical and mental health care, reconnecting with family, and finding housing (Datchi et al., 2016; Martin, 2017; Wodahl et al., 2015; Wong et al., 2018). Halfway houses are an effective correctional strategy for offenders to successfully reintegrate and re-enter communities (Wong et al., 2018). Invisible punishments also pose barriers for offenders, like exclusion from welfare programs, student loans, public or private housing, certain

neighborhoods, voting rights, and employment opportunities (Martin, 2017). Several studies have been conducted on halfway houses and their benefits for offenders. Wong et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of nine half-way houses and concluded that halfway houses are an effective correctional strategy for offenders to successfully reintegrate and re-enter communities. The study also identified some of the barriers for offenders being released from prison also include financial instability, stigma, and lack of or limited access to transportation, housing, employment, educational attainment, health coverage, and the type of community they can return to (Daquin et al., 2016; Doleac, 2018; Palmer & Christian, 2019).

Despite the benefits of halfway houses, few programs have undergone rigorous evaluation of their effects (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Wong et al., 2018). Further, most of the studies and discussions of re-entry have focused on the risks and barriers that increase the risk of recidivism. What has not been studied in any depth are the supports and opportunities that could contribute to former offenders' likelihood of successful and sustained re-entry. The scientific community has over-emphasized research efforts on the risk factors that predict the likelihood of re-offending and re-arrest, to the exclusion of examination resiliency factors that could be cultivated and rewarded as a means of improving chances of rehabilitation and re-integration (Cesana et al., 2018; Durrant, 2017; Routh & Hamilton, 2015). Therefore, this study sought to explore the experience of resilience in former offenders who are post-halfway house to improve the understanding of the reintegration process into the community for both the scientific and professional communities.

Problem Statement

There is limited research on the role of resilience in the successful re-entry from halfway houses into mainstream society for offenders. Resilience has been examined in terms of risk factors that create barriers to a successful re-entry from prison in juveniles but not adults. Underlying risk factors for incarceration and recidivism include poverty, homelessness, mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence, lack of social support and limited access to treatment (Hawthorne et al., 2012; Hunter et al., 2016; Iwamoto et al., 2012; Meijers et al., 2015). Previous violence, substance use, negative attitude, and impulsiveness are associated with increased recidivism (Sousa et al., 2019). Research has also pointed out that being Black and male are risk factors (Farrington et al., 2017; Hawthorne et al.; Leiber et al., 2018). in his quantitative study of 73 male inmates. Limited educational attainment and employment opportunities; unstable housing; substance abuse; physical and mental health concerns; family difficulties; and previous criminal history (Hunter et al., 2016; Iwamoto, et al., 2012Inmates also face considerable barriers to their social, civic, and economic participation upon release that range from chronic unemployment, poverty, and housing instability to low levels of social and human capital, poor health and mental health outcomes, and limited access to treatment (Clear, 2007; Drucker, 2013; James & Glaze, 2006; Pager et al., 2009; Petersilia, 2003).

There is far more extensive research on risk factors than protective factors; however, several longitudinal studies have identified factors that seem to protect offenders from re-offending (Durrant, 2017), meta-analysis of 15 studies. These include prosocial activities, generative opportunities, supportive adults, community investment

(Blair et al., 2019). Prior research on offenders and former offenders has identified resilience as a protective factor that may facilitate successful rehabilitation/re-entry (MacRae et al., 2011; Nee & Vernham, 2017). These have been described as external and internal factors. Fedock, Fries, and Kubiak (2013) found fourteen categories related to re-entry needs for men, but highlighted the top ten: re-entry needs for men include employment, relationship issues, other issues (ex. prayer, guidance, support), housing, transportation, basic needs (food, clothing, money), healthy/treatment (substance use and physical/mental health), legal help like obtaining identification and managing probation concerns (Fedock et al., 2013). Factors that promote resilience are personal (internal) and environmental (external; Luther, 2015). These resiliency factors, directly or indirectly, affect offender's adaptation, well-being, and positive development (Shlafer & Scrignoli, 2015).

Resilience has been studied in many other disciplines and populations as a quality that can contribute to responding to challenges with success and learning from past experiences (Bonanno, 2004; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2007; Masten et al., 2003). In prison populations, it is known that prisoners who take advantage of educational programs, stay out of trouble, come up with a plan/goal, and stay involved with family are better able to navigate their time in prison (Skowronski &Talik, 2020). Youth delinquent populations have been studied, and these inquiries found that young offenders who demonstrated resilience had fewer re-offences and better adjustment into normal civilian life (Atkinson et al., 2009; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Werner & Smith, 1992). However, little research has been done to explore how resilience is experienced

with adult former offenders who are making their way back into mainstream society. Though research has indicated that half-way houses contribute positively as and external factor (providing a stable living situation, with assistance in managing a job, legal, and other requirements), more research is called for regarding the internal experience of resilience in this target group (Wong et al., 2019).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the narratives of resilience in adult males who have transitioned from halfway house to mainstream society. "Resilience" as a construct has been studied extensively in other populations that have experienced trauma or disaster. It typically refers to either the character traits or processes by which one develops the ability to the capacity to recover from and/or move past detrimental or painful circumstances (Durrant, 2017; Richardson, 2002; Ttofi et al., 2016). Current statistics indicate that this population is at great risk for re-offending and re-arrest because of the history of trauma, criminal activity, and incarceration (Blair et al., 2020 Debowska & Boduszek, 2017; Masten, 1994). Therefore, semi structured interviews provided a better understanding of what resilience means and how it was experienced as a part of the transition from the halfway house back to mainstream society. This narrative study provides a fuller, more in-depth representation of the lived experience of resilience from residents who returned to the community from the halfway house.

Research Question

What are the narratives of resilience from males who have left the halfway house?

Conceptual Framework

The framework for this study is resilience theory. The concept of resilience has been explored in great depth in the social sciences and many elaborate models have been developed and scientifically evaluated (Durrant, 2017; Markson et al., 2015; Richardson, 2002; Shean, 2015; Ttofi et al., 2016). Resilience in its simplest definition is the ability to bounce back from some adversity; it refers to an individual's utilization of inner strengths and outer resources to overcome adverse and/or traumatic circumstances and pursue and succeed in one's endeavors. A succinct statement of resilience theory is that there is a force within everyone that drives them to seek self-actualization, altruism, wisdom, and harmony with a spiritual source of strength (Richardson, 2002). This force is resilience, and it has a variety of names depending upon the discipline. Richardson (2002) described resiliency inquiry as having emerged through phenomenological studies of survivors rather than from academic grounding in theory. He described resiliency inquiry as a three-wave path:

- Wave 1: Identification of characteristics of resilient individuals
- Wave 2: Discovery of the process of attaining resilient qualities
- Wave 3: An ongoing effort to understand how resilience characterizes the life force in all.

Richardson et al. (1990) further described the dynamics of disruptions to homeostasis (the comfort zone of the status quo) and four kinds of reintegration in the following recurring stages: dysfunctional reintegration (possibly resorting to substance abuse and other destructive behaviors); reintegration with loss (relinquishing some goal or desire to

the demands of life's prompts); reintegration back to homeostasis (returning to one's comfort zone and turning down opportunities for growth), and resilient reintegration (experiencing insight or growth through disruptions). Richardson (2002) suggested that moving through life successfully is a function of repeated resilience re-integrations—the coping process that results in growth, knowledge, self-understanding, and increased strength of resilient qualities.

Most theorists and researchers agree that resilience refers to one or more aspects of the following: (a) the protective individual differences (identified as "factors"), (b) the processes by which resilience can be cultivated; and (c) the inherent qualities of humans as part of their "drive" towards self-actualization (Richardson, 2002). There is considerable research supporting each of these domains. Resilience has been found to have strong correlation with juvenile offender's successful transition back into mainstream society (Luthar Doernberger & Zigler, 1993; Luther & Zigler, 1992; Masten, 1994; McKnight & Loper, 2002); however, it has not been studied at length in adult offenders as this study intends to do. Resilience theory was used to provide the conceptual scaffolding for studying and understanding why some offenders can successfully reintegrate into society (Garmezy, 1991; Masten et al., 2007; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1982). The key concepts of resilience were used to develop the interview guide questions and the data analysis plan. This extensive body of literature is more fully explored in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

The qualitative design for this study was narrative research design. The narrative analysis consists of thematic analysis, which will be further discussed in Chapter 3. This approach allowed me to examine offenders' lived experiences post-incarceration through analysis of themes that emerge as they told their story. Narrative inquiry is an umbrella term that captures personal and human dimensions of experiences over time while taking into account the relationship between the individual experiences in the cultural context (Clandinin & Connelly, 2006). Narrative inquiry is a means by which the researcher systematically gathers, analyzes, and represents a person's told story. The narrative inquiry focused on the content of the stories or private constructions of individuals, which is commonly the focus of narrative research. For this study, I listened, took notes and recorded the stories of resilience from post incarcerated former halfway house residents to collect data. The one-on-one, 45–60-minute interviews involved semi structured, open-ended interview questions that guided the story being told. Before beginning the interviews with the participants, I provided them a list of the questions I asked in the interview. The research question for this study guided the use of the narrative inquiry form. Once data were transcribed, they were analyzed for emerging themes, which is further explained in Chapter 3.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions apply.

Halfway house: A facility that assist prisoners' transition from prison back to the general community. These facilities are also known as community correction facilities.

The Bureau of Prison renamed them to community treatment centers in 1965 and then in the 1980s they were call residential rehabilitation centers. For this study, I refer to them as halfway houses (AOUSC, 2020).

Offenders: Males and females who have spent time in prison.

Protective factors: Can be internal (attributes and characteristics) or external (influences or conditions) features that help the offender prevail in the face of or over exposure to risk (Werner, n.d.). Protective factors were used interchangeably with promotive factors, although the literal definitions are different.

Resilience: A trait or characteristic that contributes to the ability to overcome, adapt, and/or reestablish effective functioning despite serious adversity, crisis, threats, trauma, hardship, or other significant sources of stress (Garmezy, 1991; Masten et al., 2007; Rutter, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1992). Resilience is used interchangeably with resiliency, knowing the definition is different.

Risk factors: Can be internal (attributes and characteristics) or external (influences or conditions) resources that expose or aid the offenders to their own demise (Werner, n.d.).

Assumptions

I assumed that the successful re-integration back into society is supported by resilience qualities and/or experiences. Further, I assumed that the former offenders were able to tell their stories and I was able to extract some generalizable themes. Another assumption was that the convenient sample of former offenders released from the halfway house was able to provide rich informative answers to the questions in the

structured interview; their communication skills and/or use of slang might have inhibited a deep understanding of their story. Last, it was understood that the stories rely on the offender's memory and might have been incomplete or unreliable. These assumptions were unpreventable if their lived experience is what I was seeking.

Scope and Delimitations

The target group was recruited from individuals recently released from the local halfway house and/or reported to the local probation office, which precluded interviewing individuals from outside of this region. Though both males and females are released from the halfway house back into the community, this study only included the lived experiences of males. Another delimitation to recognize was that I am a novice to the practice of qualitative research. Although I have worked with and interviewed many offenders and former offenders for the past 10 years, I had not done research interviews. I had to decipher the meaning of words since they sometimes mean different things to different people (i.e., if a person is using slang or cultural language). I relied on guidelines of recognized methodological procedures and the feedback from my committee to enhance the trustworthiness of the study.

Limitations

The limitations of the study involved the nature of research design and execution of the procedures with a degree of rigor. Narrative research is considered research that desires a holistic viewpoint and rich detail data related to one or a homogenous group of personal experiences, which by definition limits the representation of multiple viewpoints. Some other limitations to narrative research are that the participants may lose

their voice (become distracted or upset or refuse to participate) through the re-telling of the story (Harding et al., 2017). Additionally, the reported lived experience may be untrue, distorted by memory, too horrific to retell, or miss told due to fear of sanction or reprisal or their inability to recall. I was the sole investigator of the study; therefore, strategies for triangulation could not be included for improving trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Significance of the Study

This research offers contributions to advance knowledge and practical applications in working with former offenders who are returning to society (Routh & Hamilton, 2015; Souza et al., 2015). Former offenders not only experience environmental struggles as they reintegrate back into the community, but they also deal with social barriers (Martin, 2017).

Significance to Research

To capture their experiences of resiliency may shed light on the complexity and ambiguity of their journey back to the free world. Capturing the experiences of the offenders can lead to a better understanding of the rehabilitative and re-entry supports that are needed for a successful community re-entry (Souza et al., 2015). I will share the findings with the research community to improve the knowledge of this target group and how they manage re-entry.

Significance to Practice

Using narrative inquiry method for the data collection, analysis, and reporting, I presented a different view of the experience of resilience than that presented in other

studies on resilience. Given that the narratives of former offenders are limited, and success stories of such individuals are also limited, this study offers a counter-narrative with the intention to inform perspectives from a marginalized viewpoint. Understanding the experiences of former offenders who have moved from halfway houses into mainstream society could allow for exploring how intended policies, resource allocations, and opportunities are perceived and utilized. This research may also bring attention to the process of disconnection that exists. It will be helpful for practitioners to understand how it is possible for offenders to successfully transition, and to learn what is most helpful while transitioning, rather than relying on data from quantitative studies and existing literature.

For offenders, the results of the study serve as a baseline to improve resources and/or supports for a successful transition. For halfway house directors, the results of the study can help them appraise the existing programs to ensure they focus on resilience, transformation, empowerment, and civic engagement and make changes as necessary (Hunter et al., 2016). Finally, for halfway house counselors, the study can promote innovative ways to build on offenders' strengths as they identify goals and create treatment plans that impact successful community reintegration (Hunter et al., 2016).

Significance to Theory

Most who are incarcerated annually release back to the community via halfway houses or community supervision, regardless of resilience factors. Resilience theory refers to the concepts around how people adapt and are affected by things like adversity, change, loss, and risk (Richardson, 2002; Skowronski & Talik, 2020). Resilience of

offenders transitioning from halfway houses back to the community is way to assess their successfulness. Previous literature has explored protective factors, which are not necessarily resilience indicators (Richardson, 2002). This research helps clarify and understand resilience indicators that impact offender's re-entry back into the community. The findings can be used to develop new transition program guidance grounded in resilience theory for halfway houses.

Significance to Social Change

When professionals fail to make connections between clients' resilience indicator and their transition needs, it creates a disservice to clients due to the lack of awareness of the societal impact that directly relates to their recidivism. It causes providers to miss opportunities to advocate for the client and be socially responsible professionals. Knowledge gained from this study will shed light on understanding how status quo programs and systems of complacency can shape the human experience for offenders (Greenleaf & Bryant, 2012).

As a mental health professional, my objective is to help raise the awareness of resilience indicators of formerly incarcerated men in efforts to help future offenders transition successfully. Additionally, my purpose of conducting this study was to provide information from the research findings to correctional professionals, and other community services, organizations, and advocacy groups who work with offenders as they transition. Bringing these issues to the forefront may motivate and encourage different professions to have a conversation that will challenge the known risk factors for this population and support efforts to promote and support resilience. Finally, by

providing a voice to this population, future research may be used to enhance successful reintegration, decrease recidivism, and support resilience of formerly incarcerated individuals, which can save society money.

Summary and Transition

In this study, I explored resilience within the lived experiences of former halfway house residents. This chapter covered background information justifying the need to fill the gap in the literature. I identified gaps specifically in resilience and qualitative research related to adult offenders, especially those transitioning to mainstream society. The theoretical framework that was used to develop the research question is Richardson's three wave theory on resilience. The goal of the study was to increase understanding of resilience for individuals who have transitioned from the halfway house back into society. This chapter is followed by a review of related literature in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 describes the literature search strategy and literature on the theoretical framework and methodology. Additionally, it provides a review of resilience research done on offenders and addresses the gaps that support the need for this study. A description of the research design, study participants, procedures, techniques for gathering information, and narrative protocols that were used are outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Resilience is a multidimensional construct that has been studied extensively in many contexts, and with many target groups (Rutter, 1993; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004; VicHealth, 2015; Werner & Jonson, 1999). It refers to the ability to move through and past traumatic events without losing sight of personal efficacy, maintaining ego strength, and future orientation (Bonanno, 2004). Research has examined resilience in terms of resources (e.g., economic, social), and psychological assets (self-control, self-efficacy, and competence) and how they play a role in overcoming obstacles (Masten & Barnes, 2018). It is well-documented that one of the most vulnerable points for recidivism is when adults leave prison, as they face enormous challenges along the way (Hyatt & Han, 2018; Routh & Hamilton, 2015). A halfway house can give inmates the opportunity to begin developing a plan or implementing their plan for living in the free world. But for former offenders, their risk of returning to prison is high. Considerable research has been conducted on prison populations and the transition back into the community, but most of these studies have focused on factors that increase susceptibility to trauma, poor decision-making, and risky behaviors that predict incarceration and recidivism (Debowska & Boduszek, 2017; Masten, 1994). Resilience in adult offenders has not been well-studied, particularly in the literature of last 5 years (Skowronski & Talik, 2020).

The purpose of this study was to explore the narratives of resilience in adult males who have transitioned from halfway houses to back to mainstream society. The semi structured interviews captured the personal stories of these residents to provide meaningful insights on what resilience means and how it was experienced as a part of the

transition from the halfway house back to mainstream society. The following literature review includes a summary of the literature search strategy, hi700 of the halfway house movement, and the conceptual framework this study used and how it was applied to the target group.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature review strategy was to focus on locating the most current and relevant peer-reviewed journal articles. To locate current peer-reviewed journals, I limited the search to the last 10 years, focusing primarily on the last 5 years, with the exception of sources used to construct the theoretical framework. I searched for articles with the following key words, some in conjunction with others: *re-entry*, *reintegration*, *transitional services*, *halfway house*, *work release*, *felon (ex)*, *offender (ex)*, *offender rehabilitation*, *inmate*, *adult*, *resilience*, *employment*, *education*, *skills*, *social*, *family*, and *barrier*. Though assets, resources, support, and opportunity are all important factors that influence resilience, I found that social ties, family involvement and other various supports also played a role for former inmates transitioning back into society upon release from incarceration. Because I was interested in exploring the lived experiences of offenders transitioning from the halfway house back into society, I also searched for the term *qualitative* in conjunction with the terms above in seeking articles. Finally, I also searched articles using the name Richardson to look for articles to better understand his theory of resilience.

I retrieved research from multiple sources. Searches for peer-reviewed journal articles were conducted in Academic Search Complete, Bureau of Justice Statistics,

EBSCO, PsycINFO, SAGE Premier, Taylor and Francis Online. Additionally, more specific and current data was retrieved from the Bureau of Justice Statistics database; Bureau of Labor Statistics website; ProQuest Criminal Justice and the Thoreau Multi-Database. All databases searched provided a plethora of peer-reviewed journal articles to review and use as supporting documentation in this study, but none specifically related to resilience in adult offenders transitioning. However, though I found some quantitative articles on work release programs, I only found a few older peer-reviewed qualitative articles describing lived experiences of former adult participants of halfway house residency.

Conceptual Framework

Researchers agree that resilience is a complex construct and that the definition has changed over the years (Cicchetti, 2010; Garmezy, 1991; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2007; Rutter, 2012; Ungar, 2004; Werner, 1995). According to Richardson (2002), the constructs of resilience and resiliency embody numerous theories that span many academic disciplines and incorporate both intrapersonal qualities, interpersonal relationships, and structural protective factors. More recently, the definitions of resiliency and resilience have expanded to incorporate promotive factors (Masten & Reed, 2002). Although there are many possible models to explore resilience, I used Richardson's model. For this section, I will provide an overview of the conceptual framework of resilience using Richardson's three wave framework while using other studies to show how the waves are presented in research and how the waves apply to the former offenders of this study.

Richardson's Meta-Theory

Richardson (2002) examined the evolution of the theories and research on resilience in three "waves" of focus: resilient qualities, the process of resilience, and innate resilience. In the first wave, resilience was studied in terms of what enables individuals to thrive in the face of adversity when others succumb to their own demise. Some researchers focused on internal and external resilient qualities to determine how individuals adapt it to high-risk situations. The second wave of resilience inquiry focused on exploring how resilient qualities are acquired and the process of coping with change and adversity that results in the enrichment of resilient qualities or protective factors. The third wave of resilience theory is the oldest phase and looks at resilience as a spiritual source or innate resilience. It attempts to answer the question "what and where is the energy source?" or motivation to reintegrate resiliently. Basically, it is something that is in everyone that drives them to seek self-actualization or selflessness and to be on one accord with a higher power. For this study the waves of this resilience model were used as the conceptual framework to look at resilience of offenders reintegrating back into mainstream society.

First Wave Theories

Early researchers, dating back to the 1950s, such as Garmezy (1993), Rutter (1985, 1987), Werner (1993), and Werner & Smith (1992) began by focusing on resistance to negative outcomes among disadvantaged children. Warner and Smith (1992) looked at resiliency as a self-righting mechanism, whereas Lifton (1993) identified resilience as a human capacity to transform and change regardless, permitting positive

outcomes under extreme hardship. Resilience research predominantly originated in two fields early on: traumatology (looking at adults) and developmental psychology (looking at children and youth). The construct of resiliency first emerged in the phenomenological identification when looking at characteristics of young survivors in high-risk situations (Garmezy, 1991, 1993; Werner, 1995). Early resilience research with adults focused on identifying what led some individuals to avoid traumatic stress. For instance, risk and protective/promotive factors are requirements of resilience that can bring forth a positive outcome or thwart a negative outcome (Stoddard et al., 2013). Promotive factors that can help a person avoid negative effects of risk are assets or resources. Psychological assets like self-control, self-efficacy, and competence are internal promotive factors that help a person cope. Resources are external promotive factors that help individuals overcome risk. Resources can be a healthy social support system, sober housing, employment, or family connectedness (Kramer-Kuhn & Farrell, 2016). Protective factors can be variables that protect an individual against the effect of stressors, prevent the development of antisocial behavior, decrease the likelihood of criminal behavior, and increase the likelihood of prosocial functioning (de Vries Robbé & Willis, 2017). Research on what constitutes a protective factor has varied, much like the literature on resilience. But both promotive and protective factors are valuable qualities to cultivate.

Second Wave Theories

Resilience has been differently defined over the years. Fergus and Zimmermann (2005) identified three models: compensatory (direct effect), protective (interaction effect), and challenge in reference to those protective/promotive factors that can alter the

trajectory from risk exposure to a negative outcome (Garmezy et al., 1984; Rutter, 1985; Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994). Compensatory is when the promotive factor counteracts or thwarts the risk factors, which impacts the direct effect of the promotive factor on the outcome. Protective is when assets and resources neutralize or reduce the effects of risk on a negative outcome (Luther et al., 2011). Challenge is when the risk factor and outcome is wavy.

Previous studies have supported this second wave of resilience theory. Caravaca-Sánchez and García-Jarillo (2020) conducted a cross-sectional quantitative study of 174 substance use inmates to assess the perceived social supports and resilience. They found that the males showed higher levels of perceived support and resilience when they were not under the influence, which suggest that resilient qualities are attained through the law of reintegration. Hunter et al. (2016) similarly examined inmates' strengths, while managing the risk in offenders' reintegration back into society. They looked at many of the barriers presented to a transitioning inmate while at a community re-entry program, like limited employment opportunities, family difficulties, and unusable housing while helping offenders identify strengths and positive attributes that can help them navigate the process. This is what Richardson (2002) describes as the process of resilience.

Third Wave Theories

The identification of resilient qualities is characterized through phenomenological identification of developmental assets and protective factors, which they may be born with. Wagnild and Young (1993) developed the Resilience Scale (RS-14) to measure an individual's level of resilience which understood as a relatively stable personal resource.

Similar to Richardson's Wave 3, a positive personality trait that can be activated or used as personal competence to drawing upon internal and external sources of support. Wagnild and Young (1993) originally suggested a five-factor theoretical model but was later grouped into two main factors: personal competence (e.g., self-reliance, independence, invincibility, mastery, resourcefulness, and perseverance) and acceptance of self and life (e.g., adaptability, flexibility, and balanced perspective of life) (Wagnild, 2009).

In another resilience model, Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, and Kumpfer (1990) describe resilience as the dynamics of disruptions to homeostasis (the comfort zone of the status quo) and four kinds of reintegration in the following recurring stages: dysfunctional reintegration (possibly resorting to substance abuse and other destructive behaviors); reintegration with loss (relinquishing some goal or desire to the demands of life's prompts); reintegration back to homeostasis (returning to one's comfort zone and turning down opportunities for growth), and resilient reintegration (experiencing insight or growth through disruptions). This study seeks to find out how the waves and integration states impact the offenders as they transition.

Relevance to Target Group

Offenders can end up at a halfway house several ways, including an alternate to detention during pretrial, discretionary conditions of probation, prerelease (based on their risk and needs assessment), supervised released (no prison time served), and/or by violating conditions of probation. Offenders coming out of halfway houses are at risk for several negative outcomes, including limited employment opportunities, housing in

poor/drug ridden neighborhoods, and limited/no support. However, despite these risks, some offenders have a successful community re-entry, possibly due to internal and external, protective, and promotive factors. Offenders utilizing assets or resources to overcome risk demonstrate resilience, as a process or outcome; Wave 2.

A number of offenders leaving prison do not have personal identification such as a state identification card, driver's license, birth certificate, and/or Social Security card. These are necessary for re-establishing identity in the community, and all require resources to obtain employment, housing, etc. If released with no money, transportation, or support, offenders can find themselves in a disastrous situation, i.e., a set-up to fail. This is where the residential re-entry center can be handy, especially if the person does not have any innate resilient qualities; this is a Wave 1 example.

Application of Resilience Theory to Offenders and Prison Populations

There is some evidence that suggest that negative effects from incarceration can be buffered through resilience, based on the research on juveniles (Baglivio et al., 2017; Craig et al., 2017; Wolff, Baglivio, & Piquero, 2017). Based on my understanding of the literature so far, when an individual is resilient, they are better able to cope with the feelings of stress, anxiety, and uncertainty that accompanies trauma. In order to be resilient, the offender must personally make their way, using their assets and resources to meet their needs. Resources must be both available and accessible. They range from psychological resources (like feelings of self-esteem and a sense of belonging), access to health care, housing, and opportunities to display their talents to others. Combined,

individual, family, community, and cultural resources need to be there for the offenders, if they are to succeed following their release from the halfway house.

Resilience focuses on promotive and protective factors, such as positive contextual, individual, and social variables that interfere or disrupt the offender's resilience factors that enable them to overcome known negative effects experienced by those transitioning from halfway house back to mainstream society (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Zimmerman, 2013).

The two promotive factors are assets and resources. Assets refer to positive factors that reside within the offender, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, while resources denote positive factors outside the offender that promote improved post-release trajectories (Zimmerman, 2013). With the recidivism rate post imprisonment at roughly 60%, it is known that some offenders make a successful re-entry (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014).

Richardson's theory is a strength-based approach to understand why some offenders, from their perspective, are able to effectively reenter the free world by way of a halfway house, post incarceration, despite possible detrimental risk factors. Richardson' resilience theory was used to explore the strengths-based approach at understanding resilience from offender stories via assets and resources.

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

History of Halfway Houses

Probation and parole were the earliest attempts for criminal correction outside of the prison walls until the late 1950s (Brennan, 2019). During the 1960s and 1970s,

interest and support for the idea of community corrections, which was work release programs, halfway houses, substance abuse centers, and other community-based corrections (Brennan, 2019). Parole and probation began to be utilized in the United States during the 19th century (Brennan, 2019). Probation allows offenders to remain in the community under supervision with certain conditions, which most offenders are on when released from the halfway house (Hyatt & Barnes, 2017). Parole is decided by a board regarding whether an offender can re-enter society and/or is acceptable to be granted early release from the prison system (Brennan, 2019).

Pre-release placement is a term used by the Bureau of Prison that prepares offenders for reintegration into society through home confinement and/or halfway house (also known as a residential re-entry center and formerly known as a community correction center). The RRC's were a joint creation of the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Prison, and National Institute of Corrections (Wong, Bouchard, & Gushue, 2019). In 1919, the statute included home confinement in the definition of imprisonment, when utilized at the end of the offender's sentence. The law provides up to a 12 month stay at a halfway house. Home confinement is living the last 4-12 months or the last 10% (120 to 180 days) of the offender's sentence at home, whichever is less.

The Bureau of Prisons is the nation's largest correctional system which began to expand in the 1960s. The Prisoner Rehabilitation Act of 1965 expanded the use of halfway houses for those who needed substance use treatment and could benefit from structured community-based confinement. The Prisoner Rehabilitation Act of 1965

allowed the establishment of halfway houses for adult offenders to assist offenders with a successful reintegration back into society (Latessa & Lovins, 2019).

The Second Chance Act of 2007 expanded federal prisoners the opportunity to serve a portion of their prison sentence adjusting and preparing for re-entry into the community by using a halfway house. The Second Chance Act is under Section 3621 B and it requires the Bureau of Prison to consider pre- release placement for certain offenders. Prison Policy Initiative 2016 states that there were 2.3 million people incarcerated in local jails, juvenile correction centers, and military prisons (Christian & Walker, 2019). Most offenders are monitored by the board of parole or the halfway houses upon release from prison (Christian & Walker, 2019)

According to Kaeble, Maruschak, and Bonczar (2015), the decline of the prison population is attributable in part to the increased use of halfway houses (Hyatt & Han, 2018). However, it barely makes a mark on the nearly 1.6 million prisoners who are incarcerated in state and federal prisons; and less than half are released annually (Cuellar & Cheema, 2012; Jason & Olson, 2015). Sadly, of those that are released, sixty percent return to prison within one to two years of release (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014). Lack of housing, limited employment options, and substance use are strong predictors of recidivism (Cook et al., 2015). Thus, the half-way house has come to represent a pivotal intermediate place between prison and community.

A halfway house is a residential facility overseen by the Department of Corrections and is designed to facilitate reintegration and re-entry services for inmates released from prison. Halfway houses can be owned by the private or public sectors.

According to Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AOUSC, 2020) due to staffing cuts in the 1980s facilities were run by community contractors. They are designed to provide therapeutic services and connections with the community. Halfway houses are smaller than prisons and operate as a bridge between prisons and the community. The facilities provide supervision while supporting transition and resocialization (Routh & Hamilton, 2015). Offenders' movements are restricted, but inmates can attend medical appointments, employment related activities, educational and religious services (AOUSC, 2020). Within the restrictive structured environment of a halfway house, the residents have designated mealtimes, meeting times for treatment i.e., NA/AA, counseling, and vocational services, in the facility or community (AOUSC, 2020; Hyatt & Han, 2018; Routh & Hamilton, 2015). The residents have some autonomy to engage in the community (i.e., like going to their child's function at school, taking someone to dinner, etc.) with a control and parameter set by Department of Corrections (Christian & Walker, 2019; Hyatt & Han, 2018; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2003; Letessa & Lovins., 2019; Routh & Hamilton, 2015). Through these facilities, offenders also learn social norms, pro-social attitudes, and adaptive communal behaviors (Routh & Hamilton, 2015). The offenders receive treatment based on their identified needs.

Effectiveness of Halfway Houses

Offenders released from prison to a halfway house are often completing the final 4 to 12 months of their prison sentence. They can receive case management, employment assistance, medical services, and mental health and substance use treatment from a community provider (while at the RRC), if offered. Most of them have been screened as

needing services prior to being sent to the halfway house. According to AOUSC (2020), those who are high risk are most appropriate for halfway house placement, so they can obtain intensive and extensive interventions before they release to the community (Latessa, 2012; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005). If they do not follow their plan, they can be sent back to prison and not released until the completion of their entire sentence, without the above-mentioned re-entry supports. Even though they are still in the custody of the corrections, they do have more freedom at the halfway house than if they were to stay in prison until their original release date.

A halfway house can give inmates the opportunity to begin developing a plan or implementing their plan for living in the free world. These plans need to be specific to the offender, realistic, and based on their personal circumstances. This is especially true because offenders face problems, dilemmas, and uncertainties with respect to their physical and mental health status, family status, available accommodations, social contacts, among other things, upon release.

The roughly 700,000 offenders released back to the community by way of the halfway house that volunteered for this study will have completed the final 4 to 12 months of their prison sentence at the halfway house (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014; Glaze & Kaeble, 2014; Kaeble & Glaze, 2016). They will have received some form of case management, employment assistance, and/or minimal medical services while at the RRC, in addition to applicable mental health and substance use treatment from a community provider (Visher et al., 2017). Most of the residents have agreed to treatment prior to being sent to the halfway house. Wong et al. (2018) findings suggest that halfway

houses are effective for successful re-entry of offenders. The results indicated an increase of 12% of those who completed halfway house and successfully discharged from parole and 28% decline in rearrests rate than those released from prison up to one year later. Eisenberg (1990) two-year quantitative study found that individuals that didn't have a high school diploma, was a substance user, and those who have a high arrest rate seem to have reduce recidivism rates transitioning through the halfway house. Additionally, Costanza, Cox, and Kilburn (2015) show that parolees who successfully complete a halfway house program are more likely to successfully complete parole by transitioning through a halfway house.

Since halfway houses are funded by taxpayer dollars the cost is (measured in terms of social justice also) subject to being assessed for outcome (Kilburn & Costanza 2011; Zippay & Lee 2008). Hyatt and Han (2018) quasi-experimental evaluation of neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity for 19 halfway house facilities (1/8 or ¼ radius miles) found that there was an increase in reported crimes. To include violent crimes, like robbery and property offenses, which can negatively impact public health by way of public safety. This lends itself to the cost benefit analysis on effectiveness of halfway houses.

Lurigio et al. (2016) reports that through the passage of the Second Chance Act of 2008 federal funds were authorized to assist in offenders' re-entry programs that are proven to reduce re-incarceration (Latessa, 2012; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005). These programs should be closely monitored by trained professionals. One of the best way trained professionals can assess halfway houses programs is by utilizing the Correctional

Program Assessment Inventory (CPAI) (Costanza et al., 2015). The CPAI measures four factors with regard to institutional integrity: organizational integrity; program factors; change agent factors; and staff factors during a 1–2-day site visit by trained professionals (Costanza et al.). The results of the CPAI provide details to the halfway house about specific strengths and weaknesses of a program in terms of effective intervention. With increased focus on recidivism reduction and rehabilitation it is recommended to do a four-phase approach:

- Phase I: Program Assessment and Design
- Phase II: Training (Ensure staff has training on the most effective corrections programs mode: Risk-Need-Response (RNR) Model - goal is to determine offenders' individual risks of recidivism, identify what needs to be addressed to reduce those risks, and then implement interventions that can address those needs.)
- Phase III: Implementation/Coaching
- Phase IV: Quality Assurance

Lowenkamp et al. (2006) used the CPAI to evaluate 38 Ohio halfway houses and found failures in program implementation (cost effectiveness of the program) was a significant predictor of offenders' readmission to prisons for new crimes (Latessa, 2012; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2003, 2005).

Summary and Transition

A significant obstacle for offenders to overcome is transitioning from prison back to the community. Considerable research has been conducted on prison populations and

the transition, but most of these studies have focused on factors that increase susceptibility to trauma, poor decision-making, and risky behaviors that predict incarceration and recidivism (Debowska & Boduszek, 2017; Masten, 1994).

Resilience is a multidimensional construct that has been studied extensively in many contexts, and with many target groups (Rutter, 1993; Tusaie & Dyer, 2004; VicHealth, 2015; Werner & Jonson, 1999). Research has examined resilience in terms of resources (i.e., economic, social), and psychological assets (i.e., self-control, self-efficacy, and competence) and how they play a role in overcoming obstacles (Masten & Barnes, 2018).

Resilience in criminal justice populations has been studied with youth, more than adults lately. Resilience in adult offenders has not been well-studied, particularly in the literature of last five years (Skowronski & Talik, 2020). In the next chapter, I present the research design and methods for this study, with the intent to contribute to the literature and to improve the possibilities for successful transition from prison to the community.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to provide insight on the experiences of offenders leaving halfway houses and reintegrating into mainstream society. I explored the narratives of former residents of halfway houses, which were analyzed utilizing a structural approach to examine the experience of resilience in the transition from halfway house to reintegration (Riesmann, 2008). Chapter 3 presents the methodology that was used to answer the research question as well as the rationale for using narrative analysis. Components of the research methodology such as instrumentation, ethical considerations, and possible biases are also addressed. Additionally, participant selection, data collection, interviewing, and data analysis are presented. Finally, methods to enhance the quality of the study, including trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures, are explained.

Research Design and Rationale

Rationale for Narrative Analysis

To address the research question, the narrative method of qualitative research was applied. Many methodologists have framed qualitative research as a way to understand the "stories" of the participants. For the target group of parolees, there is a story that needs to be told about their experiences, struggles, and adventures as they transitioned from prison to the halfway house to the present. Unlike other qualitative methods, a narrative approach focuses on storytelling, which has no mandatory starting or finishing points and no inclusive rules about suitable material or mode of investigation (Andrews et al., 2013; Harding et al., 2017). This structure offers flexibility to hear the story in a

manner as it is presented. This approach resonated better with the former residents so they could be free to share without constraints.

After analyzing the numerous quantitative studies addressing the target population and several qualitative and quantitative studies on resilience, the decision was made to not conduct a quantitative study to address resilience factors in former offenders. Probing through research highlighted the number of quantitative studies in comparison to the few qualitative studies addressing resilience. Additionally, no current qualitative studies have been done on this target group. To address the purpose of this study, which was to seek to understand the narratives of resilience from males who have successfully been released from the halfway house, a qualitative approach provided an in-depth analysis of offenders' narratives of their experience. A quantitative study would have only provided a statistical description of resilience factors, so that approach was not chosen.

A phenomenological research approach was also considered for this study. Other forms of qualitative research are focused on the inner workings of specific groups or culture, developing theories based on specific coding of interviews, and analyzing multiple forms of data to understand a specific group or event (Reissman, 2008). Phenomenology focuses on a specific phenomenon or experience, which was similar to the purpose of this study. However, a narrative research approach was chosen due to the focus on understanding experiences through stories and using narrative analysis to find common themes and story sequences among participants who have a common experience (Riessman, 2008).

Research Questions

Primary research question: What are the narratives of resilience from males who have left the halfway house?

Subquestions:

- How does the story begin? (background)
- What is the meaning of resilience in transitioning from prison to the halfway house?
- What is the meaning of resilience in time at the halfway house?
- What is the meaning of resilience in transitioning from the halfway house to the community?
- What is the meaning of resilience in the present?

I used Richardson's (2002) model of the three waves of research on resilience as a guide to develop the research questions. The first wave is the qualities; resilience is a set of qualities, or protective mechanisms, that cause successful adaptation despite the presence of risk factors during development (Benard, 1991). Richardson's second wave (the process of coping) addresses resilience as the ability to respond positively to life conditions, stress, and trauma in such a way that enabled the individual to bounce back and to approach life with positive actions. Richardson's third wave considers the discovery of the innate tendency towards emerging from tragedy or trauma with strength and endurance. The interview guide questions were developed to investigate these three waves/aspects of resilience at each turning point of the offenders' transition from the community back into the free via the halfway house.

Role of the Researcher

I took on several roles in this study, which involved constructing the interview guide, recruiting participants, interviewing participants, listening and synthesizing the interviews, and analyzing the data. For this research project I recorded, entered, and analyzed all data collected. I was the sole researcher for this project; the selection of participants and scheduling of interviews was also managed by me. For recruiting purposes, I used the local probation office.

To ethically obtain unbiased data, the participants of the study did not have a prior personal or professional relationship with me. I also provided the participants the purpose of the study as well as any risks and consequences, within the informed consent, that could result from their participation. Participants were reminded of their rights as participants, which included the right to withdraw, review their transcript and a summary of my interpretations, and be kept anonymous. It was important when conducting interviews that I took responsibility for creating an atmosphere that allowed the participant to feel comfortable enough to openly share his responses when asked questions. A final and key role was to maintain ethical concerns that may have arisen both prior to and during the construction and process of the interviews (Orb et al., 2001).

Fourteen of the last 20 years I have worked with offenders from varying socioeconomic classes, cultures, backgrounds, and patterns of behavior which could have led to potential biases. Bias is not uncommon in qualitative research; however, I had no experience with offenders leaving the halfway house. Most of my work experience comes from working in prisons, jails, and on forensic units in state psychiatric hospital. I used

research reflexivity (Dodgson, 2019) to monitor and examine any potential bias or views should they arise. To reduce bias, I planned to keep a reflexive journal to transcribe my ideas and responses. Additionally, I planned to take notes throughout the research study about my thoughts about the processes as a way to reduce the potential for bias in my interactions with the participants, during data collection and my analysis of the data. Other procedures used to reduce the risk of bias are described in the Trustworthiness section of this study.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The targeted participants for this study met the criteria of being over the age of 21 years old, had been on parole for at least 6 months, was charged with a felony, had no diagnosed mental health or illness (self-reported), and was in a halfway house for at least 4 months. The aforementioned criteria for selection were verified via self-report during the initial contact. I proposed a purposeful homogenous sample, a common approach in qualitative studies, to recruit and identify participants. The sample size of 6–12 participants was recruited and was enough to answer the research question. A small sample size is frequently used in qualitative studies (Mason, 2010). The sample size for qualitative studies represents the development of a perspective, not a population (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

Many studies that use narrative analysis were based on single case study designs (e.g., Frosh & Emerson, 2005). However, I chose purposive sampling due to its selecting of participants process because the characteristics lend to learning about the central

phenomenon, resilience, that was being studied (Patton, 2014; Willig, 2008). The criteria for selection are those used in defining the target population. I achieved a homogenous sample with respect to those characteristics.

In order to find participants for the study, an invitation was placed at the local probation office in south Georgia, once the IRB was approved (approval no. 07-26-21-0282151). The invitation asked for potential participants to email me regarding their interest in the study and the best day/time to reach them by phone. Each person was expected to self-reported on the criteria: of time released from the halfway house (6 months or more), no reported mental health diagnosis, time in the halfway house (at least 4 months), and over the age of 21 years old.

If they met the inclusion criteria and agree to participate during the initial call, I scheduled a time for the interview and sent out the informed consent via encrypted email to read ahead of our scheduled interview. The email also asked them to reply, "I consent," if they were willing to participate. They had the option to participate in the interview virtually or by telephone. After going over the informed consent and getting recorded verbal agreement participants were asked if they would be willing to participate again at the beginning of the interview. Once they agreed to participate, interviews commenced. I reminded the participants that they could stop the interview any time. I achieved thematic saturation with six individuals. Saturation is defined as data sufficient to generate sufficient in-depth, textually rich information to answer the research question (Joyce, 2015).

Instrumentation

Data was collected throughout the 45-60 minute interview with each participant. The semi structured interview guide was developed using the narrative analysis approach (Riessmann, 2008), to guide the interviewer on the topics or issues that were covered in a conversational format to ease into the interview process and make the participant comfortable while establishing rapport. Fontana and Frey (2008) advocated building a partnership between the researcher and the participant to develop the narrative of the interview. Since this was a narrative inquiry, responses lead to developing a story.

Interview questions were related to the purpose of the research, which are the stories of lived experience related to resilience while leaving the halfway house. Their experience with challenges, supports, motivation, strengths, and limitation as they navigated back into mainstream society. The structure of the interview ensured that interviewees discussed the same set of topics, which made the data more systematic across interviews, so it was easier to analyze than an informal conversational approach.

The concept of resilience can be viewed from a range of perspectives, but this study focused on resilience from the stories of the formally incarcerated offenders as they navigated through different turning points on their journey from prison to the community. Particular attention was paid to experiences of internal and external resilience (how they coped, accessed funds, etc.) and the perceptions on the role it played in their transition. The arc of the story for the study was how the men matriculated from prison to community.

Content Validity

Content validity was established in two ways (Patton, 2014). First, the key concepts of resilience were extracted from relevant research and theory. For example, the questions about individual coping styles and risk factors were synthesized from studies including Hawthorne et al., 2012; LaCourse et al., 2019; McKnight & Loper, 2002; Navarro-Pérez et al., 2020; Richardson, 2002, 2008. For the second method, content experts who understand resilience were asked to review the interview guide and evaluate whether the questions effectively captured the topic and key concepts (i.e., content and face validity).

To establish sufficiency of data collection instruments to answer the research questions, I had the instrument reviewed by a qualitative methodologist. They assessed and identified common errors like double-barreled, confusing, and leading question. I also pre-tested the interview guide to make sure that questions could be answered by the participants.

Only one interview with each participant was conducted and lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. I included probing questions to facilitate and expand the discussion and guide the interview. See Appendix B for the interview guide.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

I obtained site permission to post flyers at the local probation office in South Georgia, which was where I posted them since most offenders have to report there at least monthly after leaving the halfway house. The residents contacted me at the phone number or email listed on the flyer to learn more about the study. After reviewing the inclusion

guidelines and reviewing the protocol of the study, I sent the Informed Consent Letter via email (or read it prior to the interview) and determine whether they would be interviewed via phone or teleconference. I recommended that they find a private place for the interview time so they could speak freely without interruption.

A one-time interview was planned to last approximately 45-60 minutes. Riessman (2008) recommended in-person interviews, but interviews through telephone or online video chats are also effective data collection methods and are most appropriate at this time due to COVID-19 (Fischer et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2017). If face to face was appropriate at this time, the setting would have occurred in a study room at the local library near the participant or at my office. Binswagner et al. (2011) noted the environment when conducting research should be taken into careful consideration to increase safety and comfort of the participants. No one chose teleconference, so they were not sent a link to join at the time of their scheduled interview. Doxy.me or some other HIPAA compliant video platform would have been used and the mp4 file would have been downloaded and transcribed. All participants chose telephone, so the calls were recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Word.

Participants were informed that they could take breaks if they experienced elevated stress levels or discomfort due to the interview content. Participants were encouraged to contact their primary care provider or local community behavior health organization or Georgia Crisis & Access Line 1-800-715-4225 or Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National 1-800-662-4357 if they experience distress following the interview.

Each interview was recorded, and notes were taken. Materials used included a recorder to audio record the telephone interviews, laptop to download and transcribe the file, and a notepad for memo writing. A password protected laptop, recorder, and encrypted flash drive were stored in a locked filing cabinet along with consent forms when they were not being used.

To debrief, time was taken after the interview to address any issues raised while participating, answer questions as they arose, and inform them of community behavior health providers should they experience any distress. I am a licensed, experienced, behavior health provider with up-to-date information about statutory and voluntary services in the area where participants were recruited and interviewed. I also explained to the participants that once the transcription was complete, I would send them a summary of the transcript to review for accuracy and ask for changes if desired. Participants were informed that only I, dissertation chair and transcriptionist (if used) would have access to the interview transcripts. Additionally, to ensure confidentiality I used pseudonyms and changed potential identifying details such street names, the names of relatives and acquaintances, etc. Audio records will remain stored in a password protected file cabinet for five years and then destroyed.

Data Analysis Plan

Following each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed by MS Word, before I performed quality control review to make sure the transcript reflects verbatim what was recorded. For this study, the data analysis process begun after the 3rd or 4th

interview was transcribed; I interviewed six individuals to improve the chances that saturation of themes generated from the data occurred.

There are three ways of engaging with narrative data:

- Thematic—the focus is on "what" is being said and "told" rather than "how" it is said and the "telling." Narratives are organized by theme, with vignettes providing illustration.
- Structural—emphasis the way a story is told; how a teller or how the story is made persuasive.
- Interactional or dialogical analysis—emphasis is on the dialogue, where storyteller and questioner jointly participate in conversation. (Reissman, 2000)

I used thematic narrative analysis to uncover phenomenon of resilience in the stories told. In the thematic narrative analysis, content was the exclusive focus (Riessman, 2008), even though I considered different narrative analysis methods. Thematic narrative analysis sees language as a direct and unambiguous route to meaning of what is being said. Narrative thematic analysis is slightly different to qualitative thematic analysis in that the latter is predominantly a coding exercise, a deductive approach in nature in which the interest is primarily in what topically and thematically surfaces in the realm of a story's content (Clarke & Braun, 2015). In the narrative thematic approach, the data was engaged from the onset and the intent was to not lose sight of the story that was told.

Data analysis was informed by Ritchie and Spencer's (2002) framework for applied research, adapted to the nature of narrative research. The framework begins with familiarization, where I immersed myself in the raw data by listening repeatedly to the

audio, then read the transcripts, in order to list key ideas. The second phase was finding common features across participants' stories and the events they reported, which is called identifying a thematic framework. The emergent codes/scenes are listed, and the process was repeated for all participants. The third phase is indexing, where the thematic framework was applied to all the data and the themes within the codes/scenes were identified. The fourth phase is charting, where all data was rearranged according to the identified codes/scenes. In line with narrative analysis, a general narrative, relying on the interpreted voice, was presented, interspersed with short quotes to set the codes/scenes and long pieces to capture the richness of the stories. The final phase is mapping and interpretation, which involved interpreting the content of each excerpt followed by bringing the excerpts together through the identification and discussion of concurrent themes and sub themes answering the research question and highlighting points of similarity and divergence.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness and validity of qualitative research depends on what the researcher sees and hears. The research must be accessible to aid trustworthiness (Yin, 2015). While the data for this research will be accessible for five years following the study, all transcripts' recordings will thereafter be disposed of. The unavailability of the data after five years causes a potential limitation to the trustworthiness and credibility of this study in the future. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are important in establishing trustworthiness.

One of the ways I sought to ensure credibility and transferability was to confirm that those interviewed had the opportunity to discuss the phenomenon I sought to explore (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). One way I established confirmability was to safeguard from researcher bias (as mentioned in Role of the Researcher section). Memo writing happened regularly throughout the study (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Holton & Walsh, 2017; Urquhart, 2016). Both memo writing and constant comparative analysis helped minimize bias, because both activities are reflective, they aided in monitoring objectivity throughout the study (Birks & Mills, 2011). Memos included topics such as thoughts or concerns related to the study, reflections on the quality of the process, and thoughts on emerging codes, categories, and the phenomenon. It was important to interpret what the data revealed to me in an unbiased way.

To ensure data integrity, notes and audio recordings were transcribed using MS Word, before I performed a quality spot check for accuracy. Notes and consent forms were stored in a locked file cabinet along with transcriptions stored on a password protected laptop, recorder, and encrypted flash drive. This section will further, address credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Credibility was achieved through member checking and by allowing the former resident to review and comment on the interviewer's notes after the interview and on the emailed summary of their transcript. Additionally, credibility was established by thick descriptions provided by the participants (they were encouraged to describe their experience in as much detail as possible) and research reflexivity (Birt et al., 2016;

Shenton, 2004; Xerri, 2017). Researcher reflexivity was done by memo writing that contained thoughts, comments, and notes throughout the data collection process.

Transferability

Transferability was limited in this study since this study sought to explore an underexplored topic. However, I attempted to achieve transferability through efforts to maximize thick descriptions in the interviews, and transparency in the data collection, analysis and presentation of results. (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Williams & Morrow, 2009).

Dependability

Birks and Mills (2011) noted that the researcher should increase attention to verbal communication to try to overcome the impact of missing non-verbal cues. To maintain consistency among all interviews, the interviews covered the same questions and concepts even though they appeared in different order depending on how the participant guided the narrative. Dependability was sought and achieved through member checking, review of interview guide, research question reviews by content and methodological experts, and following recognized procedural steps to provide for future replication (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

Introducing bias to the phenomenon or theory that emerges from this study was minimized in several ways. Yin (2015) suggested to set clear rules and follow them to help minimize bias in research. This researcher set clear rules and several controls to provide evidence of how the accuracy of data was collected and reported. Using digital

audio recorder to capture the interviews prevented me from adding to or excluding any data from the participants' interviews. Through transcribing the recordings, I did not omit data due to exhaustion or reflection. The use of memos also helped me stay accountable to the phenomenon's that emerge by reflection during the research process (Birks & Mills, 2011).

Confirmability was sought through describing the procedures to reach the conclusion and findings, listing of any potential influences that could impact the interpretation of the data to reduce bias, and interviews guides and research questions which were reviewed by the University Research Reviewer and subject matter experts prior to the approval of the study (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Any potential influences that could cause bias was listed in the Role of the Researcher section in Chapter 3.

Ethical Concerns

I ensured ethics remained a top priority throughout the study. Following the methods as outlined in this chapter was paramount in ensuring the validity and reliability of the study. The informed consent form was read to each participant prior to the interview. The informed consent follows U.S. federal guidelines, as outlined by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) including, "a fair explanation of procedures, description of risks reasonably to be expected, a description of benefits reasonably to be expected, an offer of inquiry regarding the procedures, and an instruction that the person is free to withdraw" (p. 75). The risks to human subjects associated with this study were minimal.

All participants were over 21 years of age, who did not demonstrate or report any impaired mental capacity; met the criteria to qualify to participant in the study. Additionally, per IRB ethical procedures all recorded materials will be disposed of after five years, following the final approval by the research committee, minimizing any future risks related to confidentiality.

Other possible ethical issue that could have commenced in the individual interviews were that the participant might have felt paranoid or worried about openly sharing their experiences regarding their legal history, but none was reported. However, if the situation arose, I had counseling resources available which was attached in the member checking email each participant was sent at the conclusion of the interviews. Additionally, they were reminded of the clause in the informed consent, which state they can stop participating in the interview at any time without consequence. Participant's identity is protected by the use of pseudo names and all data stored on password protected laptop, recorder, and encrypted flash drive stored in a locked file cabinet when not in use.

The protection of the participants' rights is an important and challenging aspect of research. Orb et al. (2001) describe many potential reasons for confidentiality to be broken and how discussion of certain topics might cause emotional harm to the participants. I was clear from the start about the topic discussed, informed the participant of mandatory reporting laws, and the potential risk of emotional upset that might occur during the interview process. The results of this study is presented in a manner that will highlight consistencies found in each participants' report regarding the transitions.

Summary

Chapter 3 contains the research rationale, methodology, procedures of the study, instrumentation, and ethical considerations of the study. This study implemented a thematic narrative analysis on resilience factors for men transitioning from the halfway house back to mainstream society. The participants of the study met the criteria: over the age of 21 with no reported mental health history, who spent 4 months or more in the halfway house, has a felony, and has been on parole at least 6 months. The Role of the Researcher section addressed my responsibilities in this study.

Methodology explained the target group, sampling strategies and how to address saturation, the formation of the instrumentation procedures, data collection, and data analysis strategy that were used. Trustworthiness of the study and ethical procedures explain how techniques such as member checking and peer reviewing, reducing risks to participants, and the informed consent formation assisted with maintaining the ethical integrity of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of resilience in men who successfully transitioned from prison through the halfway house to the community. This chapter presents the data analysis process and the resulting codes and themes that arose from repeated reading and analysis of the interview transcripts. The central research question that led the study was "What are the narratives of resilience of men who left the halfway house?" The study was guided by Reissman's narrative methods, and the following subquestions to explore the meaning of resilience during participants' transitions. These included:

- How does the story begin? (background)
- What is the meaning of resilience in transitioning from prison to the halfway house?
- What is the meaning of resilience in time at the halfway house?
- What is the meaning of resilience in transitioning from the halfway house to the community?
- What is the meaning of resilience in the present?

Setting

Each of the interviews were offered virtually, due to COVID-19, so the participants were comfortable in their selected space sharing their experiences. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the participants to my knowledge. The scheduling of the interviews went smoothly, as only two participants were not available at the first time agreed upon but were flexible in rescheduling. I

scheduled the interview for 1-hour increments, but most took less than an hour, which was the mutually agreed upon timeframe per the consent form. Each participant appeared enthusiastic about participating in the research project. Each former halfway house resident was offered and encouraged the opportunity to review and comment on their transcribed interview they were emailed within a week of their interview, but none responded with anything meaningful to the study.

There were no changes from Chapter 3. The protocols imposed by the halfway houses due to COVID-19 required two of the participants to reside at home while they were in the custody of the halfway house. I was not aware of this accommodation prior to the study. This was the only difference between what was planned as per Chapter 3, and the actual procedure.

Demographics

As per the inclusion criteria outlined in Chapter 3, participants were over the age of 21 years old, self-reported not having a mental health diagnosis, self-reported a felony charge, spent a minimum of 4 months in a halfway house, and had been released from halfway house custody at least 6 months. No questions were asked regarding age (besides "are you at least 21 years old"), religion, ethnic background, or address, as those demographics were not the focus of the study. All participants were male, which was consistent with the target group for the study. To be a halfway house resident, the participants had to be an adult, so there was no need to verify their specific age. I did ask the state they resided in during their halfway house stay.

Data Collection

The data collection process began after Walden University IRB approved the study in July 2021. The six interviews conducted took place from August 2021 to January 2022. Five of the participants reached out to me via the flyers posted at the local probation office in south Georgia where halfway house residents report post prison. The other two were referred by word of mouth. The six former halfway house residents constituted the purposive sample that provided the data for this study.

The six semi structured interviews were guided by a set of open-ended questions designed to encourage an exploration of the lived experiences of resilience from former halfway house residents as they transitioned to prison, back to the community via the halfway house. The participants volunteered to participate and share their experiences, as evident by their call or text regarding this study, after responding to the invitation to participate flyer or friend. I obtained email addresses and sent the informed consent form after giving a brief description of the study and answering any questions they had. Eight of the 10 participants responded to the initial email sent; only six got back with me regarding an appointment. The pre-interview script (Appendix A) was utilized once "I consent" was received from the participant. The interview date and time was scheduled after the script was read. I used the interview question guide (see Appendix B) to investigate aspects of resilience at each turning point of the offender's transition back to the free world.

Prior to conducting the interview, I thanked each participant for their time and willingness to share their experiences. I emphasized that (a) the interview would be

recorded utilizing a digital voice recorder; (b) they would receive a copy of the transcript to review for accuracy; (c) they have to right to stop or withdraw from the interview process at any time without consequence; (d) the duration of the interviews would be an hour or less; and (e) no names or specific criminal identifying information should be shared at any time during the process. I coordinated my schedule around each participant's convenience. I conducted each interview while located in my office and verified that each participant was in a safe place where they could speak freely; they each confirmed. Lastly before the interview began, I briefly reiterated the format of the interview, purpose of the study, confidentially, and permission to proceed with recording the interview.

The interview recordings took place utilizing a Sony ICD-UX570 Digital Voice Recorder to capture of each participant lived experience as former halfway house resident. I tested the device prior to all interviews and insured the device was adequately charged. All the phone interviews were recorded using a digital recorder.

When conducting the telephone interviews each participant was asked to share their feelings, opinions, and experiences during their transitions prior to prison back to the community. All participants were asked the same questions but not always word for word. Some individuals provided responses that address questions that were further down in the guide. I engaged in back-and-forth dialogue and ask follow-up questions at times to gain fuller understanding of participants experience of resilience, being mindful of over the time limit. As a result, not all were asked probing questions after providing responses

to the initial question. After six people were interviewed it became apparent that thematic saturation (similar stories across participants) had been achieved.

Each of the interviews lasted roughly 40–60 minutes. None of the participants withdrew from the process; however, some declined my request to send them a copy of the transcribed interview for correction/edits. There were no unusual circumstances during the interview process, besides two people asking to pause to take a call that came in. I finished each interview by expressing my sincere gratefulness for their participation in the study. I provided each participant with an opportunity to express any questions or concerns pertaining to participation in the research study and asked if they were experiencing any symptoms of discomfort or psychological stress because of interviewing process.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft Word document and the data was saved on a password-protected computer and finger and password-protected backup external flash drive. All the participants' interviews were confidential, since no one shared their real name. To protect the participants, each participant was assigned a pseudonym after transcription. The external flash drive, Sony recorder, reflexive journal notes, and laptop were put away in a locked fireproof resistant file cabinet in my home office. I am the only individual with access to the locked file cabinet. There were no other changes from the data collection process described in Chapter 3, nor were there any unusual circumstances encountered in my data collection process that have not been mentioned. There were no unexpected ethical concerns pertaining to the data collection process. No information was stored on the password-protected laptop computer without

utilizing a password protected folder. In accordance with IRB, all documents used during the research study process will be kept for 5 years after the completion of the study. After the 5-year retention period, all records associated with this research study will be destroyed. All data in paper form will be shredded and digital audio recordings, flash drive, laptop (outdated at that time) data will be deleted before being destroyed.

Data Analysis

I started out by immersing myself in the data before consolidating the data. I focused on parts that provided insight into the research question, looking for patterns/themes in the individual interviews and then across interviews. I then begin taking notes as I attempted to detect important concepts that could lead to the identification of patterns and themes and the meanings of those patterns and themes. These meanings or understandings are what became the findings of this study.

Thematic narrative analysis was the chosen form of qualitative data analysis. There are no set procedures for narrative analysis, but several narrative researchers have published guidelines and processes for analyzing narratives. Narrative analysts may use one of three approaches. The most common approach, narrative thematic analysis, was used because content within the text was the primary focus. The narrative thematic analysis process used consisted of five stages: (a) organization and preparation of the data, (b) obtaining a general sense of the information, (c) the coding process, (d) categories or themes, and (e) interpretation of the data (Riessman, 2009).

The organization and preparation of the data stage began with transcribing audio recordings immediately or shortly after the interview. As each recording was listened to

initially 3–4 times for accuracy. While transcribing the audio recording from the interviews the transcripts were assigned fictitious names along with the date of the interview at the top. The inductive coding process was the next stage in which the data were coded manually. I re-read the narratives and highlighted, within each narrative, prominent ideas and any recurring words or messages that possibly gave insight into the research question. Then I developed a corresponding code, a shorthand designation to easily identify the recurring words/ideas, for that passage and placed it in the margin. After completion of coding the first transcript, a master code list was constructed. As I proceeded with the next transcript, codes were pulled from the master list if applicable or new codes were created and added to the master list.

The coding process consisted of re-reading the transcripts and identifying recurring words, ideas, or patterns generated from the data. The initial master code list contained 28 codes, which were then placed into logical categories. The line-by-line coding was an iterative process that allowed me to engage in code categorization. From the categories (groups of codes) emerged the themes that became apparent and represented the major findings of the study. Table 1 shows how many times each code came up in the six interviews.

Table 1

Codes and Frequency of Occurrence

Code	Frequency of occurrence across interviews
motivation	6
healthy coping skills	6
resources	6
support system	4
spirituality/faith	4
control of	3
mentor	3

support	3
Coping	3
goal setting	2
strength	2
reframe	2
positive mindset	2
advise	2
distraction	2
Reality	1
finding purpose	1
Confidence	1
Awareness	1
Hero complex	1
Positivity	1
Treatment	1
Regret	1
ready for change	1
Preparation	1
Resonation	1
Avoidance	1
pride	1

For this study, the codes were condensed into three major themes including: (a) support, (b) coping, and (c) cognitive reframe. The last stage of narrative thematic analysis was interpretation of the data or simply making meaning from the data. This stage is not necessarily a separate stage as it was done simultaneously with the coding and categorizing stages. Interpretation consisted of studying the categories and their corresponding codes to determine if there were any overarching themes that provided insight into narratives of resilience for men who were former residents of a halfway house. The three major themes listed previously are the overarching themes that were generated from the narratives and resulted in a better understanding of the lived experiences of those former halfway house residents. Table 2 for clarification shows how the 28 different codes were categorized in to three themes of resilience with excerpts from the interviews.

Table 2

Themes, Grouped Categories, and Exemplars from the Transcripts

Themes	Codes	Examples from Interviews
Support	support system, mentor, advise, treatment, resources*, motivation*, strength, support	It was my uncle but it was he was, he was good to me. The only thing I really just couldn't get over was you know him trying to, you know, guide me when he was on drugs also you know. He was a really good person. He still is a good person, he's not on drugs today, but I just really see no. I I really like, didn't see any see any sense he was making, like. You're telling me not to do things but here you are you on drugs. That was pretty much it he was involved in nothing, he was just a drug addict, but I didn't, you know, take him serious, but now that I reflect back it on our relationship, I'm glad we still have that relationship now that today, it's even stronger Uh, my family, some of my friends that I talked to, you know. And I think, I'm thankful for, you know having friends that were understanding when they found out, instead of abandoning me, you know, it really made it much more difficult.
Coping	Healthy coping skills*, pride, avoidance, distraction, coping, confidence, spirituality	"Uh, you know this is something I don't tell too many people, 'cause, you know, not everybody don't believe in God, but I went through a a bad situation dealing With drugs. And It was just like negativity and the devil was calling out to me to do certain things and, you know I got introduced to God and I went home, got into the Bible and I mean basically that's it, you know, being introduced to God and reading the Bible. That itself change my ways." "How I learned to cope was I found you know the small resources that they offered at the time, which was, you know, programs like horticulture. They had a program for, they had a program for culinary arts and and also I got my diploma."
Cognitive Reframe	reality, resonation, regret, ready for change, preparation, positive mindset, positivity, hero complex, finding purpose, awareness, goal setting, control of, reframing	"You know, and therapist from, a therapist inside prison told me that you know, there's no honor amongst thieves. So I kind of took heed to that. And I took it for what it was, you know, I mean, I had friends. We're all on the same page, doing the same thing so you know. If they weren't inside with me, they're on outside, but it's like it, feelings change, the relationship status changes, you know. So it's just like, alright dude, you gone, there's other people out here I can run the streets with or do crime with. That's Just how it is." "They treat you like a man in there, even though you're still a child. No one cares on the inside so you have to adapt to Its A snake pit. You have to just adapt. You know, survive at all means."

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are important in establishing trustworthiness. The research must be accessible to aid trustworthiness (Yin, 2015). While the data for this research will be accessible for five years, all transcripts and recordings will thereafter be disposed of. The unavailability of the data after five years causes a potential limitation to the trustworthiness and credibility of this study in the future.

To ensure data integrity, notes and audio recordings were transcribed using MS Word, I performed a quality spot check for accuracy. Notes and consent forms were stored in a locked file cabinet along with transcriptions stored on a password protected laptop, recorder, and encrypted flash drive. This section will further, address credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

Strategies to ensure credibility for this study were member check and persistent observation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility for this study was achieved through member checking as discussed in chapter three. Each former halfway house resident was offered the opportunity to review and comment on their transcribed interview they were emailed within a week of their interview. Persistent observation was achieved as Is constantly read and reread the data, analyzed the data revising codes and categories before finalizing themes that provide in-depth insight into the phenomenon (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Transferability

Transferability is limited in this study since this study sought to explore an underexplored topic. The qualitative nature of this study did not aim to obtain generalizability, but instead the aim here was to contribute some richness to the understanding of, as well as add to the current research on resilience from former offenders transitioning from the halfway house back to the community. Further, the goal of this project too was to open the door to research on this topic, in order to describe, discover, and report the experiences of the former residents, which this study has done. Transferability was enhanced by utilizing thick descriptions provided by the participants while writing the results section (they were encouraged to describe their experience in as much detail as possible). I provided a description of the interview findings with supporting evidence presented as narrative quotes. In addition, I attempted to achieve transferability through efforts to provide transparency in the data collection, analysis and presentation of results, (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Williams & Morrow, 2009).

Transferability of findings may also be limited as I noted concerns about how well the established frameworks describing resilience were actually being reflected in the data. The proposed framework presented in Chapter 1 was Richardson's Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency (2002), however when attempting to assess the data by the three waves, it did not fit. The framework did not support the data, nor did the data support the framework.

Dependability

Dependability was sought and achieved through increased attention to verbal communication to try to overcome the impact of missed non-verbal cues, utilization of the interview guide, research question reviews by content and methodological experts, and following recognized procedural steps to aid in future replication (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004). Another strategy used to ensure dependability is known as an audit trail. My chair was my audit reviewer, who assessed and guided the quality of the data analysis process. These strategies were consistent with what was noted in chapter three and enhanced the internal validity of this study. The reliability of this project does not require complete replication, however, all of the steps taken in this project from the way the project was conceived to the steps taken developing the questions, and how the data was analyzed are included for transparency but findings in this project are unique to former halfway House residents.

Confirmability

Bias regarding the phenomenon that emerges in this study was minimized in several ways. Yin (2015) suggested to set clear rules and follow them to help minimize bias in research. This researcher set clear rules and several controls to provide evidence of how the accuracy of data was collected and reported. The use of a digital audio recorder to capture the interviews prevented I from adding or excluding any data from the participants' interviews. Through transcribing the recordings, I did not omit data due to exhaustion or reflection. The use of memos also helped I stay accountable to the phenomenon's that emerge by reflecting during the research process (Birks & Mills,

2011). Additionally, and research reflexivity was done by memo writing that contained thoughts, comments, and notes throughout the data collection process (Birt et al., 2016; Shenton, 2004; Xerri, 2017).

I openly and honestly discussed past work experience, which did not shape my interpretation of the research findings nor the approach to the study. Although as a human being I carry my convictions, passions, and experiences with me wherever I go, but I did not find it hard as a researcher to not offer judgments concerning what the former residents said. Maybe because of my years of actively listening as a social worker, I was able to encourage them to speak freely about what they thought, believed, and felt.

Confirmability was also achieved through describing the procedures to reach the findings, list of any potential influences that could impact the interpretation of the data to reduce bias, and the use of the pre-interviews script (Appendix A) and interview question guide (Appendix B) which were reviewed by the University Research Reviewer and subject matter experts prior to the approval of the study (Cope, 2014; Shenton, 2004; Williams & Morrow, 2009). Any potential influences that could cause bias was listed in the Role of the Researcher section in Chapter 3.

Results

I identified three overarching themes that appeared across all the six interviews. I begin with a brief overview of the theme and then support it with several narrative quotes. Inclusion of the narratives allowed me to provide rich, thick descriptions of the data and by keeping the narratives intact ensured clarity and meaning was conveyed. I

presented quotes, in narrative form, for each of the three themes to provide evidence of the findings.

Theme: Coping

Within this theme participants shared several experiences of how they coped with losing their freedom as they transitioned from prison back to the free world. Anthony described,

> You know, I try to educate myself as much as I can. You know, talk to other, talk to other like-minded individuals to see what they have to say. Play sport, lift weights, workout you know. I did a few things to cope. He went on to say: What I did to cope there was, I got on the phone. You know they let you have your cell phone. I got on the phone and talked to my significant other to my kid.

Jason indicated he coped by

> I would watch sports, you know, gamble on the baseball, football, ticket or what other sports were going on at the time. Play softball, go to yard. I mean it was just repetitions. Eat, go to the yard come back in the dorm. When I first wake up it's boring, during the middle of the day it would get all right once the TV come on, but pretty much it was the same thing every day, just looking forward to gambling or sports.

The participants used both internal and external means to cope with their transitions. One internal coping mechanism that was shared in over half of the interviews conducted was spirituality. Jason candidly shared,

> Uh, you know this is something I don't tell too many people, 'cause, you know, not everybody don't believe in God, but I went through a a bad situation dealing With drugs. And It was just like negativity and the devil was calling out to me to do certain things and, you know I got introduced to God and I went home, got into the Bible and I mean basically that's it, you know, being introduced to God and reading the Bible. That itself change my ways.

Birton describes his way of coping as:

> What really helped me get through that part was I really, you know, focused on a lot of spirituality. Finding myself, uhhh. You know my body was incarcerated, but I learned how to free my mind, started doing, uh, bible Studies. Bible study slash, I guess you just say uh counseling sessions every day, every day with a lot of the young guys, I took the focus off of me and start putting it towards helping those around me and and it is very inspirational at me and whatnot. And it gave me purpose. You know it gave me purpose and it gave me hope. He described his coping as it relates to religion as a metaphor, I came out unscarred. You know what I'm saying chains burnt off, I didn't burn up. The chains burnt up, the chains of all that stuff I was going through.

While some coped internally other demonstrated external ways of coping: "attending there, um substance abuse classes, Alcohol anonymous classes, um, different little programs they had inside. You know they were mandatory to attend, even if you didn't want to attend that too, you had to so" (Andy). While a few others describe external distraction type activities. Participant Christian stated, "Uhhh, play video games,

read, cook, do little working out, you know." Participant Sunny also said, "Uh, letters. Uh pictures, emails, phone calls. Just basically reaching out, uh, from the outside in."

> Others used a mix of internal and external ways of coping. Participant Birton said, I do my little cardio part of my workout and then after that shower, I would go to work. This was at one particular time. I go to work. After work I'm working, out again, finishing my real workout. After that I'm either going to class, one of those classes and stuff, or some church program. Uh, when it really get late, uhhh I watch a little bit of TV or I just walk. I walk the track listening to music. I used to be a loner a lot, you know, I talk to my family and then I would sit down and do a whole lot of planning on my dreams and my goals.

Regardless of the participants coping method it lends to a form of resilience as the former offenders utilized to navigate the different transitions back to the community.

Theme: Support

Another common theme participants connected to resilience was that of support. Anthony shared,

> Back then, positively what kept me going was, you know, watching my grandma come come try to save me every time I get into something. Here she comes here she comes and I always wanted to you know, make her proud or even pay her back in some way, but she died, you know and I still kind of feel feel bad about that, but you know. It's a different date now!

He went on to add, he had additional support:

> Yeah, that uncle he got off drugs and he's been like a father ever since. Well even before but that uncle that I mentioned yeah, he got off drugs. He supported me really heavy. I had a son and he supported him to, he still supports him and me. You know, my son's mother, she was there for me. She still is, even out here.

Birton similarly described support as impacting his transition from the halfway house back to the community:

> It's always some older guy that's always gonna push you to be, rather than how he used to be, better than what he was when he was my age. It's always some older guy that doesn't want to see you walk down that same road he walked down. Even inside the halfway house and in prison 'cause you some older guys that are never coming home!

When Andy was asked about his experience he struggled to come up with an answer to the question and indicated:

> Um, counselors, you know, day in and day out they on top of you. Making sure you're out doing something positive. You know, they keeping tabs on you, but it's to keep you out of trouble. The counselors I always had something, you know, they may not want nothing. They just want to see you, you know, doing the right thing and that was enough for me. Counselors, you know, showed a lot of caring. Even though they wanted you to go to work. You know, work as much as you can. That's what they tell me, you need to get as many hours as you can, even though they wanted they wanted you to work, work, work. They always, you

> know, treated you in some kind of respect. Even though you are still currently, you are still considered an inmate. You are human.

Even for those who did not have family support they found support through mentors or being a mentee. Participant Sunny shared,

> Uhhh, especially this one guy he gave me like a real tip that I took throughout the whole way and I I can say I saw other people fall victim to it and I could say that it was a good uh good advice that he gave me. He told me just stay whatever you do just stay away from the four G's. And ummm, I said it what's the four GS and he said, you know, that's the guards, the gangs, gambling, and gates. … He said if you stay away from the four GS, you'll be alright, and I did and yeah, I made it through, but I saw a lot of other people did not and they had a rougher time.

Others described support as resources, like money, cell phones, cards, books, clothes, or programs and yet others described it as motivation: "you're dealing with your mental, that's the most important thing you're trying to keep your mental intact because if not, it can break!" (Sunny).

Theme: Cognitive Reframe

A common theme shared by all the participants was how they reframed their experiences in order to get through their transitions. Cognitive reframe is a technique used to turn a problem into an opportunity for change and growth and/or just presenting an alternate perception or interpretation of an experience. Some techniques they used that depicted reframing were finding purpose, becoming aware of their actions that lead them to their current state, making sense of what they actually had control of (instead of

perceived control), preparing their selves for the real world, being real with their self, and setting goals. Anthony stated, “What I had control over there was, how how I was going to be successful, you know. How I was gonna make my tomorrow’s day better than my yesterday.” Sunny stated, “But you know, I used the time to uhhh, to get myself together, I put it in my mind that when I was in a detention center that I would, uh, I will use that time to come out a better person then whatever I came in as.” He went on to say: “So until they figure out that what they know to be the right thing is not, then they’re like, it’s just gonna keep happening to them. So it’s all about, you know, the mindset and and looking for a better future.” Birton shared his feelings and experience that informed his cognitive reframe:

> Of course with all the heartbreaking and loneliness in there because you’re away from your family. But what really helped me cope was the goals I set to recreate my life (stutter) to reverse all of the negativity that I created and and and and and you know the curse, the curse that was upon my family, for all those years, so that became my stomping ground ummm of change, you know?

Andy’s summation of what prompted his reframing:

> They treat you like a man in there, even though you’re still a child. No one cares on the inside so you have to adapt to it it’s a snake pit. You have to just adapt! You know, survive at all means!

He went on to describe how he reframed his thoughts around the friends he thought he had prior to his incarceration:

> A therapist inside prison told me that you know, there's no honor amongst thieves. So I kind of took heed to that. And I took it for what it was, you know what I mean, I had friends. We're all on the same page, doing the same thing so you know. If they weren't inside with me, they're on outside, but it's like feelings change, the relationship status changes, you know. So it's just like, alright dude, you gone, there's other people out here I can run the streets with or do crime with. That's just how it is!

Discrepant Findings

"Hero complex" was a thematic discrepant finding of the study. Birton described this phenomenon as him engaging in the criminal activities to save himself and his family from their lower socio-economic status. The way he described resilience prior to prison did not seem to fit into any of the three themes neatly:

> Uh, I would say what lead me to prison was uhh, you know, my desire to take care of my family, to create a solution, uh, I guess you can say the Robin Hood of my community, uh, try to uplift the community.

Summary of Results

Before Incarceration

All participants began by answering a series of questions about resilience as it pertained to life before prison. Establishing a picture of their lives before they were sentenced to prison allowed I inside. Each shared their experiences, feelings, struggles of their lives before incarceration. They described relationships with family, friends, and/or the justice system. Jason said, "you know some of the crimes I did with one of my family

members, well actually two of 'em." They also described how resilience played a role during this transition to cope with life's circumstances (e.g., drinking, using drugs, stealing, and harming others). Sunny mentioned, "I lived my days drinking. Prior to prison, it wasn't a day that went by that I wasn't under the influence of alcohol." These were coded as negative coping skills. Less than half of the participants reported not having any type of support system nor were they able to identify any type of cognitive reframe prior to prison. Andy stated,

> I didn't have any family or a family member to kind of guide me or want to guide me … from the age of about 13 or 14, I kinda was out on my own. A typical day was pretty much running around just being a bad kid doing bad things, fighting, stealing, any little thing I could get my hands on. Just just bringing unpleasantries to other individuals, all because I've never had like everything I wanted.

Prison to Halfway House

Each participant described his life in prison and during the process to get approved for the halfway house and how resilience impacted this phase of the transition. All participants' recounted experiences of intense emotion: fear, loneliness, anger, disappointment, feeling judged. Birton expressed, "It was tough. It really was. It's tough, its, you know, being in there by yourself you know, and in that cell and ouhhh (sigh), It was a lot." They expressed regret, rejection and embarrassment, such as Danny, who said, "My pastor from my church, she came and visited me a couple of times but it was just embarrassing to me in that situation, so I didn't really reach out to as much as she reached out to me."

Expressions of resilience included reframing the reality of their current situation and consequences, regret for their actions, setting goals, finding a purpose, self-assessment of what they have control of, but not limited to these. Birton noted, "What really help me cope was the goals I set to recreate my life [stutter] to reverse all of the negativity that I created [stutter] and you know the curse that was upon my family, for all those years." The results of the cognitive reframing led to all six participants finding healthy ways to cope with their incarceration (i.e., getting into healthy routines, working out, working on goals, and obtaining their GED). Andy said, "I was lucky enough to get my GED inside, that's something I needed. That's something I knew I needed and was able to get it because now you really can't do much without a GED or high school diploma." Five of the participants reported their efforts of resilience led to them getting approved to go to the halfway house, such as Sunny: "basically, just not getting in trouble. Uh, that's the that's the main thing. Like you know you can't really hope to go to the halfway house if you're not doing well in prison." While in prison all participants reported instances of having support at one point or another, even though less than half reported family support. Most found support from "caring counselor," "ole head in prison," and/or peers. Sunny said,

> This one guy he gave me like a real tip that I took throughout the whole way …. He told me whatever you do just stay away from the four G's. And ummm, I said what's the four G's? And he said, you know, that's the guards, the gangs, gambling, and gates.

At the Halfway House

All the participants shared experiences of resilience as a result of being one step closer to home. Christian reported,

> knowing that I'm almost home, I'm almost home! I'm I'm in the city. You know, I ain't at the house yet, but at least I'm in the city … it gives you time to get your head together, realizing you're home, you're not in prison no more, you know. Things are going to be a little bit different, you you gonna have some of your freedom back. The bad part kind of reminds you of prison because the men side is crowded.

Most reported reengaging with family, friends, and other supports while at the halfway house, as they were able to have cell phones and were closer to home for visitation. Most of the men were motivated by "being halfway free."

Five of the participates' continued using cognitive reframe, coping skills, and support as they were available. However, one resident reported the halfway house was too close to his old neighborhood, and he was easily influenced to return to return to negative coping strategies, which led him back to prison. In contrast, Danny expressed, "The halfway house was right beside my old neighborhood, so that was comforting when I got to go out the door and being able to walk in that neighborhood." This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

Some of them reported adjusting their cognitive reframing once they got to the halfway house, while others said they just continued what they started in prison (e.g., goals, a positive mindset, finding their purpose, managing emotions). Jason stated, "My

emotions, you know, I'm not perfect I still get mad sometimes but I don't show it, you know, I keep it inside and I never thought that I would be able to do this." Five participants them reported adding work to their coping skills, as it was a requirement to be at the halfway house. One participant reported being exempt of this working requirement due to his medical condition.

Halfway House to the Community

All six of the participants reporting reported their struggle with resilience as they transitioned back to the community, from the halfway house. While at the halfway house they can go home on pass for a weekend, work in the community, go to the gym, etc. with time constraints, leg monitors, and consistent checking in with halfway house staff. Some (n = 5) did not feel that there were enough supports and/or access to support to counter the temptation to return to their pre-prison, familiar old neighborhoods, with family who engaged in criminal behavior, and/or toxic ex-girlfriends. Most participants found someone at the halfway house (peer or counselor) as a support to aid in how they reframed their thinking to stay out of prison.

While I did not collect data on everyone regarding length of time in prison, three said that they were incarcerated 8 years or more. For these participants, their cognitive reframe that worked in prison and at the halfway house did not "fit" the new realities of the civilian world. Birton said, "Prison really taught me how to appreciate time! … Time goes so fast here, so I was like hey let me take this time off because it's almost time to really become almost totally free. So I just looked forward." Their ability to cope with the

new demands of civilian life and coming out of prison as a felon was challenged by the obstacles to gainful employment, decent housing, and new relationships.

Most all of them attributed their successful transition to the consistency of their cognitive reframe. All six of the participants shared examples cognitive reframe as maintaining of a positive mindset, focus on goals, accepting their reality, being ready for something new, etc. Birton shared,

> I started really really taking those dreams and goals that I manifested in prison. I start bringing it to life, as far as you know, all the different, uh, you know uh business endeavors for the mental health program and entertainment, all that stuff. So that's what really started getting me excited. I started appreciating. I said you know this ankle bracelet on my leg, even though it's a form of imprisonment it still is a form of, I'm a say protection. It protected me from the old buddies that wanna come get me and take me out. Going to, you know, places where I used to go and that kept me grounded

Resilience in their Present Situation

Most of them are now on parole, which means the incarcerated portion of their sentence is over. However, they still are under supervision of the justice system. They live as free people, but they do have to meet with their probation officer at least monthly to monitor their progress, in addition to a possible urinalysis, visit to their workplace, and other probation requirements. Reported cognitive reframes persisted into the present situation. In fact, several of the participants noted that they used the same strategies as when they transitioned to the community and felt that this was already explained. Jason

said, “You, you enjoy life more even if it’s just walking up the street and smoke a cigarette or just walk on the street and get on the bus here, you’re gonna enjoy it more.”

Summary

I selected narrative inquiry for this doctoral research study because through narratives I gained insight into resilience from the perspective of former halfway house residents, which corresponded to the purpose and research questions. The purpose of this study was to provide a deeper understanding of resilience from formerly incarcerated individual as they transitioned back into society. In this qualitative research study, data was collected through semi structured interviews with six former residents. From narrative thematic analysis three themes regarding resilience emerged thereby providing a better understanding of the experiences of the former offenders who resided at halfway houses in South Georgia. In this chapter, I discussed the data analysis process which included the setting, demographics of the participants, the data collection process, and findings. Evidence of trustworthiness during the data collection process was presented and the answers provided by the research participants provided insight into the research question guiding the study. In sum, the results of the study revealed three major themes that address the primary research question. The former halfway house residents provided rich narratives of resilience as coping skills, supports, and cognitive reframe. Thematic saturation was attained through the rich narratives of the six participants.

The subquestions were asked in order to explore the possible commonalities of turning points across the various turns of the narrative. To address the subquestions, all participants were asked essentially the same set of exploratory questions regarding each

transition phase from the community back to the community, post halfway house. They were asked about each phase in temporal order in order to develop a rich narrative of resilience. The purpose of this analysis was to inquire as to whether there were shared meanings across the individual narratives of resilience. As Riessman (2009) pointed out, while each individual story has an inherent coherency through it's telling, the coherency across cases may not always be found.

Chapter 5 provides a summary discussion of the findings considering the need to broaden the understanding of resilience from lived experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals after being released from a halfway house. Then, I provided limitations of the study and recommendations for social justice. Lastly, I explored implications before providing a conclusion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the narratives of resilience in adult males who transitioned from the halfway house to mainstream society to address a gap in the literature. Resilience as a construct has been studied extensively in various populations that have experienced all types of hardships or atrocities, but there was no recent literature found on halfway house participants. Since this population is at great risk for re-arrest within the first year, this study sought a better understanding of how persons who participated in halfway house facilities described their re-entry back into society.

I conducted interviews with six former halfway house residents who now live in the community as free men. Through the inductive coding process 28 codes were identified, which were categorized into three resilience themes: coping, cognitive reframe, and support. Coping was described as the stories they told of how they dealt with difficult feelings, events, and experiences. Cognitive reframe emerged as mental techniques used to change the way a situation, experience, and/or thought was viewed and acted upon. Support was expressed as internal and external resources to aid in getting their needs met. These themes are consistent with the current literature constructs of resilience. Transitioning from the halfway house these participants found healthy coping skills, cognitive reframe, and support as ways to persevere through their ups and downs, feelings of being close to home but not being home, and the reality of their current and future challenges as a felon. This study also uncovered one discrepant finding, which was the hero complex that one of the participants described. He shared that he had a hero complex, which meant he looked at himself as Robin Hood; his role was to protect save

his family and community. This code did not appear to fit neatly into one of the themes that was revealed in this study.

Interpretation of Findings

Comparison to the Previous Literature

Over 70% of those incarcerated return to prison within the first year (James, 2015). Although this was not something explored by this study, it was something this study substantiated. Four of the six participants mentioned this latest release was not their first. Thus, recidivism was an underlying theme of the resilience experience. Lack of housing, limited employment options, and substance use are strong predictors of recidivism (Cook et al., 2015). This was consistent with the current study's results. In addition, some participants noted that they did not want employment as society designed other ways to make money like fraud or selling drugs. Offenders coming out of halfway houses are at risk for several negative outcomes, including limited employment opportunities, housing in poor/drug-ridden neighborhoods, and limited or no support. However, despite these risks, some offenders have made a successful community re-entry, confirmed by the lived experiences shared in this study. Their experiences of internal and external resilience (how they coped, accessed employment, etc.) showed how they matriculate from prison to community.

A substantive amount of research has been conducted over the past years on resilience; however, no peer-reviewed articles within the last 10 years were found regarding the stories of resilience from adult offenders leaving a halfway house. Resilience in criminal justice populations has been studied with youth, more than adults

lately. But resilience in adult offenders has not been well-studied, particularly in the literature of last 5 years (Skowronski & Talik, 2020). This research differs from previous studies on adult male offenders on several levels. First, it focused on offenders who are leaving the halfway house and capturing stories of resilience. Although there was some recent research on resilience, this study is unique in that it contributes to the gap in literature on resilience with former offenders. These findings represent a template for future research on resilience with offenders who are transitioning from the halfway house back to the community.

The three major resiliency themes that emerged from the data were support, cognitive reframe, and coping skills. The theme support is consistent with current literature as being an important factor in how individuals overcome difficult situations. Prior research on juvenile offenders also identified supports as being an important resilience factor to overcoming effects of incarceration (Blair et al., 2019; Luthar et al., 1993). Stories of support in this study included external supports like other studies have, to include support from family, pastors, mentors, peers, and counselors. Several (n = 4) participants expressed that they had little to no support prior to prison but how they found sources of support as they transitioned through the system. Support of the halfway house staff, communities, and peer at the halfway house were reported as being crucial in locating resources like housing or jobs. Some just needed emotional support; someone to vent to or understand their struggle.

Another theme that emerged was coping. Accounts of coping included strategies used during emotional, scary, and stressful times during the transitions. Most of the men

reported using bad coping skills prior to prison, like stealing, using alcohol or drugs, or hurting people to cope with their situation. However, each of them developed and were using more positive coping methods by the time they reached the halfway house, such as staying busy with school, work, or working out, or connecting with family. Christian noted, "Read a lot of books and went to church on Sunday and just tried to find a way to keep my head clear and didn't have to worry about my surroundings too much." As described on in the literature review, coping and resilience are nearly synonymous. Coping mechanisms are essential to mitigating a maladaptive stress response. Coping is a protective factor, protecting against the effect of stressors, which decrease the likelihood of criminal behavior and increase the likelihood of prosocial functioning (de Vries Robbé & Willis, 2017). Support is one of 10 re-entry needs of men (Fedock et al., 2013), and social support links and networks are one of three dimensions of protective factors (Sephered et al., 2016). As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a consistency across research results indicating that protective factors like support contribute to resilience (Ttofi et al., 2016).

Cognitive reframe was the third theme the emerged. Cognitive reframe is a mental technique used to change the way a situation, experience, and/or thought is viewed. The participants each shared experiences of how they replaced negative thoughts about their situation with more positive ones, how they found hope, and/or the decision to do something different in hopes of attaining a different outcome. Most of them described realizing the reality of their situation and accepting it, like having lots of friends or girls in the community until they were locked up and then "no one was there." They spoke of

finding their purpose, setting goals, preparing themselves for a different lifestyle than the one they knew prior to prison and these changes were influenced by support or ways they found to cope. Birton shared, "I actually had goals and stuff written down from a very personal standpoint and I wanted to accomplish … So I started endeavoring in these different things, whether it was loving my family more or doing research on a career." Building and maintaining supportive social networks, healthy coping skills, and cognitive reframe can have long term benefits, according to the stories depicted in this study.

Luther (2015) found that factors that promote resilience are personal (internal) or environmental (external). The three themes discovered in this research are consistent with his findings. Cognitive reframe was described as personal; support was depicted as environmental; and coping was portrayed as an internal and/or external process. Some coping codes like working out, programing, or attending school would be considered environmental, while faith, positivity, and building confidence are personal factors of resilience.

Relevance to the Theoretical Framework

Richardson's three wave meta-analysis on resilience and resiliency theory served as a theoretical framework for this study. This framework was used to allow participants in the study to share stories of their lived experiences of resilience through their transitions from the community back to the community, with a specific focus on resilience while transitioning from the halfway house to the community.

Richardson (2002) examined the evolution of the theories and research on resilience in three "waves" of focus: resilient qualities, the process of resilience, and

innate resilience. This study sought to find out how the waves and integration states impact the offenders as they transition. In the first wave, resilience was studied in terms of 'what enables individuals to thrive in the face of adversity when others succumb to their own demise. This was confirmed by the seven codes of coping identified in their stories, such as staying busy with work, substance abuse or GED programs. The second wave of resilience inquiry focused on exploring 'how resilient qualities are acquired, which was also corroborated as they were depicted in the thirteen codes that lead to the theme cognitive reframe. The third wave examines resilience as a spiritual source or innate resilience. Most (n = 4) of the participants shared narratives of how their spirituality or faith fostered resilience during their transitions. In this study connecting with a higher power was used to cope, so it was categorized accordingly, while it too supported the third wave. In sum, this study findings on resilience supported Richardson's (2002) meta-theoretical article findings on the constructs of resilience and resiliency.

Limitations of the Study

The execution of this study had personal and methodological challenges. Due to time restraints of the IRB approval at Walden University, my extended bout with COVID-19, moving out of the country for work, as well as the choice to work within a narrative methodological framework to focus on a relatively small and relatively homogeneous target group. I had to complete recruitment and interviews within a 6-month period. Access to participants was further limited by being out of school a few quarters, so I was not able to obtain feedback, direction, guidance. I stopped data

collection once I felt that thematic saturation was met. This may have created challenges to the dependability and credibility of the study.

The other possible limitations discussed in Chapter 1 were the nature of the research design, execution of the procedures with a degree of rigor, and the ability of participants to accurately relate their stories. Regarding the design, as a qualitative researcher the aim was not towards generalizability, but to contribute richness to the understanding of resilience from former halfway house residents, and this was done. The findings of this research are limited by demographics of the participants. Although a purposive sampling methodology was used, all the participants were males who reported to one probation office in south Georgia. Thus, transferability may be limited.

The degree of procedural rigor executed in this study thwarted any overt limitation of the findings. None of the residents "lost" their voice or ended the interview early. Concerns regarding validity of the truth of the participants descriptions are supported by the standpoint and approach used to conduct this research project. The dependability of the results emerged from the lived histories of the participants themselves. Member checking with participants was used to confirm the meaning of interview responses and participants' perspectives throughout the interviews. Since transcripts were not returned with feedback, I am not sure if that's validation of correctness or they just did not review them. Given that I did not assess records, interview counselors or prison staff (triangulation), I have no way of knowing the extent of the participants' truthfulness/accuracy regarding their experiences, nor do I question any participant's authenticity. Although triangulation could have led to greater credibility

of the study these shared stories are valuable and unique to each of the former residents themselves and offer contribution to existing limited literature.

Recommendations

Future research can address the limitations raised in this study by taking several actions. First, I recommend improving the recruiting strategy to obtain a larger sample and more diverse sample, reaching out to several different parole offices to ensure the inclusion of a greater diversity of participants with respect to race, gender, and disabilities. This could improve transferability and enhance the credibility of the study findings, although demographics was not important to this study. Second, expanding studies to multiple locations using a qualitative case study approach could reveal other stories of resilience to confirm or expand the saturation of concepts that may be influenced by the contextual factors of the halfway house itself. Additionally, the inclusion of diverse voices, particularly women, may reveal distinct stories of resilience. It is recommended that this study being replicated with female offenders.

Second, it would be interesting to collect data prospectively, as the offenders transitioned through each phase, instead of relying on their memory at the end of their sentence. One of the participants was sentenced to 15 years so he was relying on his memory to recount stories from over a decade and a half. This could be challenging relying on a person's memories regarding their feelings and experiences accurately from over a decade ago. Future qualitative studies involving former halfway house residents could include a prospective, longitudinal component to better understand how and when resilience emerged and changed overtime, especially through the transitions.

Lastly, replication will strengthen or refute the current findings, in addition to reinforcing the external validity of this study's findings. This could further contribute to the literature as it relates to experiences of resilience of former offenders and/or Richardson's three wave concept of resilience. Replicating the current study with a larger, diverse sample, in close to real-time stories can further enhance the literature gap on resilience and offenders.

Implications

This study maintains several implications for policies and practice that can foster resilience in the justice system, which will support positive social change for some offenders. It is known that recidivism is in issue that affects all citizens, so the suggested recommendations could impact the current recidivism rate, which is 2/3 of all released offenders are re-incarcerated within the first year. The three themes of resilience deducted from the participants stories are: coping skills, cognitive reframe, and support and proved impactful in their successful re-entry back into society.

There are two areas where I see positive social change can be made as suggested by the findings of this study. The study corroborates that there is a lack of supports for offenders once they are incarcerated especially for those who did not already have a support system prior to their incarceration. This is an opportunity for professionals to make a difference in terms of providing or fostering support, authorizing treatment groups, or supporting those who are acting as mentee/mentoring agents in prison.

I recommend that halfway house, correctional professionals, and school professionals undergo training to expand their awareness of the challenges faced by

offenders who transition to and from prison, to include how they as professionals can foster support in terms of resilience. I recall being a young counselor in prison, in my early 20's, I had no idea of the experiences shared in this study. Such training program should include content that clarifies the problem of offenders who may not have had healthy role models or parental figures, poor financial situations, unorthodox roles assume in their home due to the household make up or socioeconomic status, and social pressures they face in neighborhood in which they live.

Considering the school to prison pipeline phenomena, I would also extend this offering to school staff to aid in the understanding of the challenges faced by some students to effectively help them foster resilience in the school, with a hope it carries into the community and the remainder of the child's life. Additionally, this research found that some of the participants spoke of not having anyone to turn to at a young age, so schools could be an opportunity to mitigate the risk of developing future offenders.

Interventions specific to this population need to be based on the cultivation of trust and the formation and maintenance of healthy support systems that teach and demonstrate healthy coping skills, and cognitive reframing in their daily lives. These interventions could also be geared to support families if they are interested in learning how to foster resilience in their household/communities.

Prison Program

Although this was a small dataset, the interviews provided an important perspective on resilience for offenders transitioning from prison to the halfway house. Men who are incarcerated face disproportionate burden as it relates to their conditions

prior to prison and continue as they transition through the justice system. Despite all of their challenges they face, the studies depict resilience plays a vital role in their successful transition back to the community. As they share stories prior to their incarceration to their experience at the halfway house, the results suggested that this was a transformation process to endure and survive the experience.

This data underscores the need for revealing and encouraging resilience in men who are incarcerated. Many prisons offer support programs to improve management of certain conditions, mainly substance-abuse. To my knowledge there is no support group specific to teaching resilience in prison or at the halfway house. Improving coping skills, developing and maintaining support systems, and teaching men how to look at their situation and future with a positive lens will provide benefits that can enhance the quality of life for those re-entering society.

Halfway Houses Program

Halfway houses were established to provide support for those needing additional assistance as they transition back to the community. This study shows that if individuals develop the three dimensions of resilience that they improve their chances of successfully moving from prison to the community. I would recommend offering a program in the halfway house where they can learn skills on how to cope with life, establishing a support network, and cognitive reframe while they are waiting to find employment, housing and/or meet other requirements. Whether these factors are learned in school, prison, or in a re-entry program they could strengthen individuals, families, community, and society.

Conclusions

The findings from this study are supported by rich stories of resilience from the shared histories. Looking back on my experience working in prisons, I was too busy to even think about how some offenders did not return and some did. I adopted assumptions portrayed by society or did not think care. However, the findings of this study made me recall how some inmates post release would attempt to reach out to me for additional support, so I extended the boundaries of my job duties. Reflecting on these stories of resilience makes me now realize I could have been the first or only source of support for some of those people. If opportunities to connect and build resilience in prison were more available, successful, sustainable re-entry back into the community could be possible for more offenders.

These findings clearly support the premise that resilience plays a vital role in successful re-entry back into the community. Participants shared experiences of resilience through their different transitions to provide a richer description, especially in terms of their circumstances when resilience began and how it evolved, if relevant. The prominence of these personal experiences also provided strong support for the idea that resilience can be either internal or external resources and/or supports. Getting sentenced to prison can be a wakeup call, and all of this study's participants figured out a way to get through the adverse experience by building resilience. The shared histories laid the groundwork for accepting and embracing the idea that resilience can be an individual, evolving, never-ending process.

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Appendix A: Pre-Interview Script

Thank you for your interest in this study. I hope you have had the chance to read the consent form I sent you. As a reminder, I will briefly outline the purpose of the study, read the consent form and what your interview would involve should you wish to go ahead with it:

I am studying for a doctorate in Forensic Psychology at Walden University and a research project is the final component to complete my degree. I am interested in the experiences of former resident of the halfway house that have transitioned back into the community. I would like to hear about how life was during your transition, including the barriers and triumphs. I am particularly interested in how you made sense of the difficulties you faced, and what has helped you move forward despite the obstacles you confronted.

I plan to interview 6 to 12 former hallway house residents. Each interview will last about 45 minutes to one hour. I will need to record the interviews so that I can play them back and have them transcribed into a document. I will summarize and send you a summary of that document to review and make sure I have captured your interview accurately. I will analyze and write up the results which were reviewed by the University, and I plan to publish in an academic journal. And I'll send you a summary of the research.

Everything you say were kept confidential, and no one will be able to identify you. Nothing that reveals who you are will be included in any documents that other people read, and recordings will be deleted and tapes destroyed after they have been transcribed. The only time I may need to tell someone else what you have said is if you tell me that you are in danger. This reporting is only for your safety.

[Read Consent form]

Please remember that if you choose to go ahead with an interview, you do not have to speak about anything that you do not feel comfortable discussing. It is not necessary for you to talk in detail about any difficult personal experiences you may have had. It is fine to withdraw now, or to stop the interview at any time if you choose to participate.

Do you have any questions?

Would you be willing to participate in an interview?

Appendix B: Interview Question Guide

I'm about to ask you a few questions about your transition from prison back to this current moment. This interview is seeking the real story about your transition back to the community by describing your experiences. Remember if you begin to feel uncomfortable, you can stop at any time.

1. Let's start with where your story starts. What were the circumstances that got you into prison? What was a typical day like for you back then?
    a. Reflecting back on that time now, what were the meaningful experiences or relationships that kept you going?
    b. Key resilience questions – what did you have control over? What did you do to cope? Where did you find comfort? What kept you motivated? What type of supports did you have access to or rely on? What did you look forward to? What strengths/limitation did you encounter? What resources used/were available?
2. Now tell me about what prison life was like for you? (How long? What happened?) What was a typical day like for you back then?
    a. Key resilience questions – what did you have control over? What did you do to cope? Where did you find comfort? What kept you motivated? What type of supports did you have access to or rely on? What did you look forward to? What strengths/limitation did you encounter? What resources used/were available?
3. Now let's talk about what it took for you to get out of prison
    a. Key resilience questions – what did you have control over? What did you do to cope? Where did you find comfort? What kept you motivated? What type of supports did you have access to or rely on? What did you look forward to? What strengths/limitation did you encounter? What resources used/were available?
4. And how did you find the halfway house - tell me about this part of your journey? What did it take to qualify? How did you get there?

   a. What was a typical day like for you back then?
   b. Reflecting back on that time now, what were the meaningful experiences or relationships that kept you going?
   c. Key resilience questions – what did you have control over? What did you do to cope? Where did you find comfort? What kept you motivated? What type of supports did you have access to or rely on? What did you look forward to? What strengths/limitation did you encounter? What resources used/were available?

5. Walk me through your transition from the halfway house. What was your experience transition back to the community? What was your role? What was the criterion?
   a. What was a typical day look like?
   b. Describe what you are doing now that you have left the halfway house.
   c. Reflecting back on that time now, what were the meaningful experiences or relationships that kept you going?
   d. Key resilience questions – what did you have control over? What did you do to cope? Where did you find comfort? What kept you motivated? What type of supports did you have access to or rely on? What did you look forward to? What strengths/limitation did you encounter? What resources used/were available?
6. Looking back, was there something in your decision-making process that kept you going as you were making your transition? Can you give me an example?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me before we finish?