

Negotiating Bereavement and Loss: Influencing Persistence and Desistance from Crime

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ABSTRACT

Much previous research has considered experiences of bereavement and loss during a prison based setting. This overshadows the character of bereavement within the context of community supervision and probation delivery, leading to inadequate explorations of the potential link to persistence and/or desistance from crime. Research into desistance has predominantly focused on relationships with those that are still alive. This text evidences an emergent theme of bereavement experiences within the context of probation delivery, relationships and desistance. It draws upon narrative research undertaken within a Community Rehabilitation Company within the north of England, collected as a part of a doctoral thesis. Evidence demonstrates the similarities between the method of desistance which of bereavement with the narratives of men and ladies reiterating how bereavement can influence the onset of criminal or risk-taking behaviour whilst highlighting emergent evidence on how bereavement can disrupt desistance. This permits the article to spotlight the importance of resilience within the process of both bereavement and desistance.

Keywords: Bereavement, Desistance, Loss, Persistence, Relationships

INTRODUCTION

Bereavement, and loss, is experienced by all folks, with different responses and effects. However, the impact of bereavement on reoffending and desistance has gained limited attention within the criminal justice system, and when considered the main target is usually within a prison-based environment. Therefore, understanding and knowledge of individual experiences of bereavement, and loss, within community supervision and therefore the potential links to reoffending and/or desistance from crime are limited. Additionally, previous research into desistance has focused on relationships with those that are still living. This text therefore provides vital and original insight achieved through in-depth narratives where experiences of bereavement emerged as an influencing theme within wider doctoral research focused on relational networks and desistance. As previous research into desistance has focused on male perspectives and experiences, this text offers a crucial integration of data across gender to make a stronger understanding of desistance. Additionally, narratives evidence the similarities between the method of desistance which of bereavement. The article develops our knowledge and understanding of tertiary and relational desistance, with the previous recognising the importance of an individual's sense of belonging and therefore the latter considering how change is recognised by others. Each highlights the elemental role of

relationships, but doesn't consider how this will be influenced through experiences of bereavement. Narratives reiterate how bereavement can influence the onset of criminal and/or risk-taking behaviour and highlight how bereavement can disrupt desistance. They highlight the trauma, emotion and attachment surrounding relationships with deceased individuals and also the ripple effect of bereavement when considering the broader impact of additional supportive relationships. Finally, the article draws upon narratives to evidence the importance of developing resilience to support both desistance and experiences of bereavement. Relationships and desistance: Exploring emotion and attachment, bereavement and loss

Theories of desistance are well established within criminological literature, when considering explorations of how and why individuals move faraway from offending behaviour. When recognising the individual desistance research highlights maturational theories, internal motivations, changing identities, the popularity of a possible self and therefore the role of private agency. This resonates with existential sociological and criminological thought which explores how individuals add up of themselves in their look for a meaningful identity. Structurally, desistance literature recognises strong social bonds, the influence of social capital and therefore the importance of structural 'hooks' like employment or marriage. These individual and

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structural influences are drawn together through an interactionist perspective of desistance which identifies the interplay between a private and their wider social and structural circumstances. It's therefore fundamental desistance is known within relational, cultural and structural contexts, and for ladies there's also a recognition of harm, vulnerability and victimisation.

Desistance is usually recognised as a process summarised within literature as primary, secondary or tertiary. Primary considers short-term crime-free periods and a change in behaviour; secondary focuses on how individuals assume roles as a non-offender and evidences a change in identity; and tertiary cares with a real sense of belonging.

Desistance is additionally recognised to involve temporary suspensions and/or a decline in frequency or severity of offending, instead of complete cessation. It's therefore endless zigzag journey of potential relapses. In recognition of a faraway from linear process, have identified act, identity and relational desistance. The primary relates to no offending behaviour, the second considers the internalisation of a non-offending identity and therefore the third highlights how change is recognised by others. This text draws upon the theoretical strengths of both

explorations to think about individual and structural influences within the context of bereavement and loss to develop ideas and understanding of tertiary and relational desistance.

Relationships form a part of lifestyle with each folks surrounded by a singular relational network. Our relationships can represent both enabling and constraining interactions and for those under community supervision are established, maintained and challenged differently counting on the individual. Desistance should be understood and acknowledged within the context of relationships, with tertiary desistance recognising that positive and valued relationships can provide feelings of inclusion. Relational desistance also highlights the importance of others recognising and supporting an individual's process of change. Additionally, relationships can influence primary or act desistance, alongside secondary or identity desistance as they will have an immediate influence on offending behaviour and/or an individual's identity. However, it's going to not be the connection that influences desistance, but the meaning behind it. Therefore, recognising trauma, emotion and attachment is prime when considering desistance or continued offending and therefore the potential link to bereavement and loss.