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The Mental and Emotional Experiences of Probation and Parole Officers Supervising Sex

Offenders

by

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# The Mental and Emotional Experience of Probation and Parole Officers Supervising Sex Offenders

Thesis Abstract – Idaho State University (2020)

Sex offenders are commonly perceived by communities as being scary, untrustworthy, and creepy. But how do those who work with them daily perceive them and how are they affected by their interactions with sex offenders? This study seeks to understand how Probation and Parole officers are affected mentally and emotionally by their jobs requiring extensive interaction with sex offenders to uphold supervision standards. Surveying three Idaho judicial districts, semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the daily experience as well as to uncover barriers officers face that prevent the successful reintegration of offenders back into their communities.

**KEYWORDS:** Sex Offender, Parole and Probation, Emotional Labor Theory, Role Theory, Presentation of Self



## Chapter I : Introduction

The term *sex offender* in American societies has developed a negative connotation regardless of its classification use in law enforcement agencies (Harris & Socia, 2016). Often when community members hear the term sex offender or are asked what it means to them, their replies include descriptions such as predator, child molester, or creepy old grandpa, among many others. (Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011).

Probation and parole officers responsible for supervising sex offenders can be and often are affected by the way in which sex offenders are perceived and often rejected by their surrounding communities, family, and friends. Officers are affected negatively because their ability to fulfill their job duties to their respective department of corrections and community is hindered by a lack of support received. As a result, officers begin to experience burnout and potentially secondary trauma.

We can use Hochschild's theory of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1979; Hochschild, 1983), to see that officers are required to fulfill multiple, sometimes overlapping roles. This is an expansion of the original emotional labor theory because it suggests that the specific roles probation and parole officers are required to take on go far beyond merely portraying a "customer-service" front, but rather officers must remain vigilant of the context of the situation, audience(es), and the role they must take on in order to continue to protect their communities.

This topic has not been extensively researched and constitutes an important gap in corrections research. Addressing the issues that probation and parole officers face is vital to the operation of parole and probation departments and the ultimate protection of communities. Understanding how officers are affected mentally and emotionally by their jobs will help departments determine best practices to keep officers safe mentally and emotionally.

This study seeks to understand how probation and parole officers working in three Idaho judicial districts are affected mentally and emotionally by their job descriptions and responsibilities. Assessing factors such as caseload size, prior interactions with challenging populations, community support, and departmental support helps us to paint an overall picture of officers' lived experiences. This allows us to determine possible actions the Idaho Department of Corrections can undertake in order to ensure that their probation and parole officers experience minimal burnout and secondary trauma.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Probation and Parole**

Probation and parole are integral aspects of the criminal justice system and are crucial to the community reentry process. They share a common goal: the reduction of recidivism (Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011; Dina, 1960). Blasko et al. (2015) operationally define parole as the release of prisoners back into a community before completion of their maximum sentence. In Idaho, when an individual is assigned to a parole caseload, they have had their incarceration sentence suspended and replaced with a sentence that allows them to serve the remainder of their time within the community under strict supervision.

Probation is a variation of parole that involves a suspension of a sentence by the court (Dina 1960). The individual is supervised in the community until they complete their term of probation, commit a technical violation of the conditions of probation, or commit a new offense. Probation is understood as “a chance for a probationer to have another chance, and the threat of punishment should he fail to improve his behavior” (Dina 1960).

Parole and probation differ between the states. For example, in New York State, parole is a state-level responsibility, and probation is administered on the county level. In Idaho, the Bureau of Probation and Parole is responsible for the supervision of probationers and parolees. From 1997 to 2008, Florida enacted intensive supervision standards for individuals who have been convicted of sex offenses. These standards ranged from residency restrictions up to submitting DNA specimens and annual polygraph testing (Datz, 2007). These standards were in response to sex crimes, abductions, and murders of underage children that occurred in that time frame (Datz, 2007). Notwithstanding these variations, both probation and parole officers work towards reducing recidivism.

Blasko, Friedmann, and Rhodes et al. (2015) suggest that three issues must be addressed to effectively reduce recidivism: caring/fairness, trust, and toughness. Lack of toughness and trust then are predictors of rearrest. When probationers perceive their supervising officer as being unnecessarily harsh, they tend to violate their probation more often. Caring/fairness, however, is associated with lower arrest and violation rates, suggesting that when officers exude caring and fairness, probationers and parolees were more likely to comply with the law (Blasko, Friedmann, and Rhodes et a., 2015).

### **Probation and Parole in Idaho State**

In Idaho, probation and parole officers work for the Idaho Department of Corrections (IDOC). To be considered for employment with IDOC, candidates must complete several assessments and orientations. All officers must complete the Idaho Peace Officer Standards Academy and Certification or POST (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2016). While in POST academy, candidates are subjected to various physical and mental fitness tests. They also learn the basic requirements of general caseload supervision and specialty caseload supervision. After completing POST, candidates receive on the job training with seasoned officers dealing with a variety of scenarios, both dangerous and non-dangerous, and they are introduced to policies and procedures across all of the Department of Correction entities (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2016). However, officers are not trained for the case management aspect of their jobs, which often presents itself when supervising specialty caseloads.

When officers are assigned to specialized caseloads, they play dual roles as case managers and as supervisors throughout an individual's supervision period. This is unique to Idaho. Elsewhere, these responsibilities are routinely handled by different persons. But in Idaho,

once an individual is released from incarceration, their probation and parole officer is responsible for case management and for directing them to various community and state resources, such as Vocational Rehabilitation (for employment) or the Department of Health and Welfare. This means that probation and parole officers must foster positive relations with those departments, and with future community employers and landlords.

### *Generalized and Specialty Caseloads in Idaho*

Individuals released on probation and parole are required to abide by a set of regulations outlined by the supervising jurisdiction of the parole district in which they live, as well as in Idaho code 20-219. Supervision conditions vary from parolee to parolee based on the severity of their crime, the timeframe in which it took place, the location, and the severity of charges. Examples of supervision conditions include curfews, routine polygraphing, routine drug testing, and community area restrictions. Thus, they face a constant risk of recommitment, becoming incarcerated again.

In Idaho, there are two caseloads, a general caseload, and the sex offender caseload. In Idaho, officers describe the sex offender caseload as a specialty caseload. General caseload officers work only with offenders who commit “traditional” offenses, such as drug use/trafficking, theft/burglary, and homicide. Probationers and parolees are considered low-risk or high-risk based on various risk assessments done by their supervising officer<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Assessments used to determine the level of risk include the STATIC99, LSI-R, Stable 2007. The STATIC99 is a 10 item survey that assesses sexual and violent recidivism among male offenders who have been convicted of one or more sexual offenses against a child or non-consenting adult. LSI-R is a 54 item survey that looks at the offender's overall recidivism potential, as well as assessing what criminological needs are present throughout supervision. The LSI-R is done every year to reevaluate the offender's needs. Stable 2007 assessment is also a sexual offense assessment containing 13 items that assess for risk factors that are subject to change throughout supervision and is conducted every six months to reassess the presenting risks.

Officers assigned to sex offender caseloads are required to participate in 16 hours of sex offender specific training (Idaho Department of Correction, 2012). Some of the training involves approvals for travel and activity requests, identification of items or actions that indicate recidivism, and the sex offender registry laws. Officers also learn how to use various matrices to determine levels of risk. In addition to this, they learn how to work and coordinate with treatment providers, help probationers or parolees find employment, housing, and meet basic needs. Finally, officers are responsible for ensuring that offenders participate in polygraph tests every six months and comply with treatment programs (Idaho Department of Correction, 2012).

Before travel requests are approved, offenders are required to accomplish five separate tasks, all of which are closely monitored by their supervisors. Officers are also required to work with probationers and parolees to help them understand employment and housing opportunities and restrictions and assist the probationer or parolee in finding a chaperone and going through the approval process. Chaperones act as a second set of eyes for the officer when the offender is in the community. There is a lengthy process involved to ensure that the chaperone candidate meets IDOC requirements. Of the nine steps involved in the approval of chaperone requests, their officer must guarantee six steps are met (Idaho Department of Correction, 2012).

General caseload officers often supervise individuals going through problem-solving courts, such as drug, family, mental health, and veterans court (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2017). Like officers supervising the specialty caseload, general caseload officers utilize the LSR-I risk assessment to determine the needs and level of risk for individuals on their caseload. Unlike officers who supervise sex offender caseloads, general caseload officers do not take on the extra seven steps as outlined in the Sex Offense Policy (Idaho Department of Education,

2012). Instead, they utilize goals to guide supervision and submit their findings to CIS (a database of individuals under supervision).

Within General caseload supervision, there are two supervision terms used to guide an officer. “Front-loaded” supervision is when an officer gets to know an individual assigned to them, understand their charges and past criminal history, build a rapport, and begin to set goals for the supervision period. This type of supervision also allows the officer to learn about their client’s needs and develop ways to address those needs. The activities that are part of front-loaded supervision must take place within the first 90 days of an offender’s supervision (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2017). The second supervision type is focused on supervision standards associated with the general caseload. This type of supervision is more focused on the quality of interactions rather than the number of interactions. Officers utilizing this type of supervision impose the minimum supervision standards and focus heavily on rapport building, mentoring, reviewing progress toward goals, and building on the individual’s strengths (Idaho Department of Correction, 2017).

### **Sex Offender Caseloads in Idaho**

The management of individuals with Sex Offender designations is complex. Bumby and Carter (2010) suggest that proper risk assessment and case management methods must be implemented. A unique aspect of the sex offense caseload, setting it apart from the general caseload, is the definitive list of locations that the offender is prohibited from being without an approved chaperone. Additionally, romantic relationships must be monitored by the assigned officer. This is done to ensure that the partner is of legal age, not from a vulnerable population, and is aware of the offender’s sexual criminal history (Idaho Department of Correction, 2012).

Sex offense caseload officers work with both low and high-risk sex offenders. Sexual offenses and offenders are a highly diverse population. Charges range from enticing a child over the internet to murder in perpetration of rape (18 USC § 8303). The list also includes “crimes against nature,” patronizing prostitution, indecent exposure, and sexual contact with an animal (18 U.S.C. § 8303). Finally, repercussions can include everything from psychosexual counseling, psychosocial counseling, to residency and employment restrictions.

In Idaho, there is presently only one in-patient sex offender treatment facility. It is located in a Northern Idaho correctional Facility (Idaho Department of Corrections: Sex Offender Treatment Services, 2020). There, treatment is designed to meet standards of the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM) and Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). Depending on the severity of the conviction against an offender, officers may be able to mandate that the offender begin their treatment at the in-patient facility to help curb their dangerous tendencies. Offenders are required to pay for treatment and twice-yearly polygraph tests. They are required to keep their assigned officer aware of their location at all times by submitting travel and activity requests.

#### *Sex Offender Employment and Housing Restrictions*

It is difficult for sex offenders to find adequate housing and employment (Brown, Spencer, & Deakinn, 2007; Lester, 2007; Bagley, 2006). They often face scrutiny and fear as they begin to reenter their communities (Church, Wakeman, Miller, et al., 2008). As part of the “get tough on crime” effort, politicians work to pass laws that significantly limit the employment and housing opportunities for sex offenders in order to protect and satisfy those who elected them into office (Bagley, 2006; Brown, Spencer, & Dean, 2007; Lester, 2007; Church, Wakeman, Miller, et al., 2008; Oliver, 2009; Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011; Mustaine,



Tewksbury, Connor, et al., 2015). In nineteen states, employment and housing restrictions are intended to stay in effect beyond the supervision period (Lester, 2007). In Idaho known sex offenders may not live within 500 feet of any building that might hold or be near vulnerable individuals or potential victims such as schools, churches, and parks (Lester, 2007; 18 U.S.C. § 8329). This restriction can stay in effect for up to 10 years, or until the end of the offender's life (Lester, 2007). This may motivate probationers to abscond in order to find adequate and affordable housing (Oliver, 2009). The lack in accommodations complicates an offender's search to find employment that pays a livable wage (Brown, Spencer, and Deakin, 2007).

The officers in this study report that employment is one of the best ways to reduce recidivism among sex offenders. Stable employment can encourage feelings of social inclusion and motivate sex offenders to complete their treatment program and supervision (Brown, Spencer, and Deakin, 2007). When a sex offender is forced to quit a job due to being out of compliance with their supervision, feelings of extreme stress and anxiety can result (Lester, 2007). Probation and parole officers mandate that everyone on their caseload is stably employed.

Rules regarding sex offender employment in Idaho are similar to restrictions in states such as New York and Florida. No one is permitted to seek or accept employment in any position that would allow them access to previous victims or potential victims (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2012). To this end, probation and parole officers are mandated to assess and approve any offer of employment prior to acceptance of a job offer. In order for the officer to assess the legality of the opportunity, they must interview the hiring manager in-person or over the phone. Any change in employment must be submitted and approved by the supervising officer within two weeks of the offender's initial hire date (Idaho Department of Corrections, 2012).

## **Burnout and Secondary Victimization Among Officers**

Officers who supervise individuals on sex offender caseloads are required to familiarize themselves with the individuals' histories and charges. To understand the offender's thought processes and offending patterns, the officer must view physical evidence (photos, videos, personal statements, etc.). The acts sometimes depicted in this evidence can challenge social morals and values that deal with appropriate sexuality. This can lead to "secondary victimization" and emotional burnout among parole and probation officers.

Secondary victimization is a risk that comes with any law enforcement position, but the risk is elevated in the case of sex offense officers. According to McCann and Pearlman (1990), secondary trauma is defined as "...negative changes in clinicians' cognitions that result from listening to clients' victimization experiences over time" (Bride, Robinson, Yegidis, et al. 2004) claim that secondary victimization can often result in behaviors and feelings similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Severson and Pettus-Davis (2013) estimate that anywhere from 46% to 80% of sex offense officers experience secondary victimization. Nor is secondary victimization limited to detrimental coping techniques. Officers can also suffer victimization through hyper-vigilance when they are out in the field (Severson and Pettus-Davis, 2013). This can functionally impair their ability to do their job (Bride, Robinson, Yegidis, et al., 2004). Officers often also feel a sense of responsibility to prevent recidivism among offenders, which can lead to physical symptoms such as isolation, reliance on alcohol, and lack of motivation at work (Guldborg, 2016).

Burnout has been interpreted in the literature in various ways. Whitehead (1985) describes burnout as encompassing feelings of cynicism and emotional exhaustion. Kadambi and Truscott (2003) define it as the diminishment of emotional energy, enthusiasm, and overall

interest in the work needing to be done. McCann and Pearlman (1990) suggest that burnout can make even the most mundane tasks and goals become too unbearable to complete. White, Aalsma, Holloway, et al. (2015) argue that "[B]urn out is a response to prolonged or repeated exposure to work-related stressors, commonly characterized by feelings of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment on the job." Probation and parole officers experiencing burnout may exhibit: depression, mental and emotional exhaustion, reliance upon illegal substances, increased alcohol use, and feelings of incompetence (Kadambi & Truscott, 2003; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; White, Aalsma, Holloway, et al., 2015; Guldberg, 2016; Hasselt, Sheehan, Malcolm, et al., 2008; Whitehead, 1985).

Some scholars argue that burnout is a good thing. Whitehead argues (1985) that burnout may have a decisive role as it "weed[s]" out those who are not able to carry out responsibilities. He posits that officers who suffer burnout may be overly attached emotionally to their caseload. When the burden becomes too great, the officer leaves (Whitehead, 1985). Hasselt, Sheehan, Malcolm, et al. (2008) add that boredom may lead to burnout. Rotating-out duties and officers can minimize boredom and maintain officer morale, thus preventing burnout. They argue that burnout can also be caused by job stressors, including the execution of duties that are typically done by case managers but are carried out by the officer. Officers who participate in this study state that the separation of case management work from supervision duties can significantly reduce job stress, as the officers now need to spend less time triaging their clients. Kadambi and Truscott (2003) argue that burnout, unlike secondary victimization may only be temporary and preventable, with proper mental and emotional safeguards.

### Chapter III: Theory

This chapter focuses on the theories used to understand how probation and parole officers experience their job emotionally. “Emotional labor theory” was first developed by Arlie Hochschild (1979). It is an essential part in officers engaging in the “presentation of self” theory and “role conflict” theory. Utilizing all three theories, we can begin to understand the different roles officers are required to perform and what emotions are required in each.

#### Emotional Labor Theory and Probation/Parole

A central component of the probation and parole profession is to engage in emotional labor (Grandey, 2003). For example, officers in this study report doing this when they communicate with community members. The officers have to instill in the community members confidence that their well-being is not at stake, because of intensive supervision standards the offenders are required to abide by. This has to be done without regard for the officer's personal opinions and the feelings they might have regarding the offender being discussed.

Emotional labor is a subset of “emotion work.” Hochschild characterizes emotion work as attempt to “manage” one’s emotions to the social interactions in which they are participating. It is the *effort* put into it, not the *outcome* of the attempt (Hochschild, 1979). “Emotional labor” in contrast, involves the performance of emotion work *as part of one’s job*: “the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display” (Hochschild, 1983). In her research, Hochschild applied the concept of emotional labor to flight attendants and bill collectors (1983). Flight attending, she believed, is perhaps the simplest occupation in which to observe this theory in action. It includes welcoming passengers boarding a plane, and serving them during flight experience by answering calls, questions, or concerns.

Hochschild claims that despite the appearance of sincere friendliness, and availability, attendants are acting (Hochschild, 1979). “Surface acting” refers to the expression of desired forms of emotion through physical behavior (Ashforth & Humphry, 1993; Hochschild, 1979, Grandey, 2000). “Deep acting” on the other hand is sincere behavior plus the appropriate feelings. The first allows for the actor in question to outwardly express their genuine feelings. In the second form the actor expresses the feelings of a “trained imagination.” That is when they attempt to project an emotion presumably in an imagined situation. Grandey (2003), for example, cites a hotel clerk who attempts to place themselves into the shoes of a disgruntled guest, to empathize with them. However, the attempt may be perceived by the guest as fake.

Hochschild states that we rely on “feeling and display rules” to discern between deep acting and surface acting. She argues that feeling rules apply to people wanting and needing to feel a specific emotion. To do this, they rely on unwritten social guidelines (Hochschild, 1979). An example she gives is when an individual is on a romantic date. Here, the dater uses information provided by their partner’s physical appearance, tone of voice, and assorted situation cues to inform them what to feel. Should they feel physical attraction and connection? Or should they feel disinterest and disconnection? Display rules tell the dater how they should then behave. Another example concerns persons who work frontline service positions like shoe salespeople or clerks, where feeling and display rules require them to exhibit positive emotions, instead of anger and frustration with difficult customers and clients (Grandey, 2003). This thesis will focus on those and the ways in which both kinds of emotional labor are utilized by probation and parole officers.

## **Probation and Parole Emotional Labor**

Each of the roles that probation and parole officers play are characterized by particular forms of emotional labor. By studying these feeling rules, we can begin to understand the emotional labor relevant to each role taken on by officers. Blasko, Friendmann, & Rhodes (2015) describe how, by following such rules, officers portray understanding, hope, and authority toward an offender. Once the offender reciprocates these emotions, mutual understanding is established, and the pair can then move toward becoming “goal-oriented.” The ultimate goal is the prevention of recidivism and the reintegration of the offender back into the community.

When officers are interacting with members of criminal justice institutions (directors, supervisors, judges, law enforcement officers, etc.), they must portray very different emotions. In these situations, the officer must exhibit confidence and hope in the offender’s future while also maintaining the mandates of the court. Unfortunately, despite the officer’s best attempt to elicit confidence and hope, the judge may decide to express the fear and distrust of the community (Fox, 2013).

At the same time that they enact the feeling rules relevant to the institution and to the offender, officers must also practice appropriate emotional labor in the community. According to Fox (2013) community members often feel extreme fear, distaste, and anger towards anyone classified as a sex offender. This in turn results in sex offenders being ostracized. Officers naturally come into contact with community members, worried about the whereabouts of someone on the sex offender registry or caseload. It is up to the officer, calling upon feeling rules, to instill confidence in citizens that the offender in question poses no immediate threat to the community. This is usually done via telephone conversation. Here, the officer must remain calm, cool, and collected. By not getting worked up, showing the same level of concern, and

remaining confident in the offender's progress, the officer attempts to ease the community member's fears.

### **Role Strain and Role Theory**

Utilizing emotional labor appropriately when switching from role to role is extremely effective. If done right, the result will be enhanced trust. But this requires that each emotional appearance "lives in its realm." That is, the emotions portrayed and received among colleagues must remain separate from those presented in the offender realm, and the offender realm from the community member realm. This challenge is called "role conflict" (Jones, 1993).

The result of role conflict is confusion as to what role to take on in a social situation. Probation and Parole officers play three leading roles: community protector, institutional colleague, and offender mentor/authority figure (Sigler & McGraw, 1984; Allard, Worley, & Steward, 2010). These vary depending on the officer's position in the community, in the institutional hierarchy, and on their individual presence. Officers often have to switch from one role to another in order to satisfy their surroundings. When an offender is in the room with other officers and superiors, the officer must simultaneously perform as a mentor and also act in an institutional role (Allard, Worley, & Steward, 2010). The ensuing role conflict can be stressful for offenders, for colleagues, and if any were to witness it, for community members.

Goode (1960) writes that "role strain occurs" when actors experience difficulty in fulfilling role obligations. They may attempt to reduce it by utilizing "role bargaining." Here, they weigh options and outcomes and select what they perceive to be the most appropriate role to portray. Probation and Parole officers run into role strain when they have to "think on the fly," due to inadequate or minimal training (Thomas, 1968). This is often seen when an officer is

interacting with a client. However, it may also occur when the officer moves up through the institutional ranks and has to rely on situational information rather than on written policy (Thomas, 1968). This can happen when written policies are contradictory when visual evidence about the offender doesn't fit policy, or perhaps due to the offender's own trauma and the deficient mental state (O'Donnell & Stephans, 2001; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Role strain and role conflict then, are both familiar to probation and parole officers throughout the day. This, in turn, can affect or induce "burnout" (Jones, 1993). To cope with and understand burnout, it is important to identify exactly what its source is.

### **The Presentation of Self**

According to Biddle (1986), role theory describes how humans act out patterns of behaviors in given social situations. This is often compared to the way in which trained actors take on roles that engage an audience's emotions and identities (Biddle, 1986). The most influential proponent of role theory is Erving Goffman.

Goffman claims that by presenting themselves to the "audience," actors invite them to see things in a desired way and to feel certain emotions (Goffman, 1956). Officers apply this idea when they switch from one role to another. They continuously ask themselves: how can I foster a desired emotion in my audience and get them to see things in a desired way? For example, when they interact with an offender, strapped for resources such as housing and employment opportunities, they must still exude confidence and optimism to keep their clients motivated in the face of stress and anxiety.

Tewksbury (2005) examines this in officers who work with registered sex offenders facing social ostracism. It then becomes the responsibility of the officer to help the offender re-



establish rapport with their families and the community. This can be extremely difficult and requires extensive training. Exacerbating this is that officers also have to present themselves as mentors to their clients, as well as supervisory figures when switching from one role to another. The officer must continuously ask themselves, “How can I foster my clients’ trust and confidence?”

### **Identified Roles Taken on by Officers**

The institutional role(s) of the Probation and Parole officer are mostly played out behind the scenes. As we have seen outside of participating in supervisory duties, officers must act as case managers for the offenders listed on their caseloads. But in addition to serving the clients, they must also keep in mind that they are working for the Idaho Department of Corrections. And they must uphold a positive reputation for the Department. This includes regularly reporting to their supervisors as well as bearing in mind funding allocations for various offender types and needs. In order to carry out this institutional role, officers must engage in “emotional dissonance.” This is a variation of emotional labor in which the officer displays emotions that differ significantly from their genuine feelings (Asforth and Tomiuk, 2000). A common theme found among the differences in this thesis is having to show the supervisor and even offender at any given time, everything is under control and on track. In actuality, however, the officer may be feeling swamped by the job. An example is when they are required to find ways to overcome funding shortfalls, personifying that “everything is under control.”

The Idaho Department of Corrections GAP analysis for the fiscal year 2018, makes no mention of sex offender funding (Idaho Department of Corrections and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, 2018). That year the Joint Finances Appropriation Committee of the State

Legislature approved a budget of 7.1 million dollars allocated towards the treatment of substance use disorder. During the fiscal year 2018, \$4,061,138.15 was spent on substance use disorder treatment (an average of just over \$4,500 per person under felony supervision for substance use). While at the same time, little, if any, attention was shown towards the financial needs of the sex offender caseload. This lack of attention produces a burden on case managers/officers. Although we can't be sure that members of the IDOC are hesitant to address the sex offender caseload may be due to the negative social stigma surrounding the issue in Idaho.

A second role taken on by officers is that of a mentor and authority toward the offenders on their caseload. That is, to draw upon Goffman's notion of the presentation of self (1956), the officer must "present themselves" in a manner that is both inviting and demanding. This can be challenging. Often, offenders utilize meeting times with their officer to discuss the various struggles, victories, and losses they are experiencing (Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012). Depending on the context of the situation, the officer must activate various display rules (Hochschild, 1979; Mesmer-Magnus, DeChurch, & Wax, 2012). Officers who successfully fulfill the authority mentor role are considered to be "synthetic" officers (Kennealy, Skeem, Manchak, et al., 2012). A complete synthetic officer-offender relationship places equal emphasis on transforming offender behavior and public protection. This type of supervision has been shown to be most effective (Kennealy, Skeem, Manchak, et al., 2012).

A third role taken on by officers is that of a community protector. For our purposes, we'll call this role "community emotional labor." Officers in this thesis report that they are viewed by the community they work in as a sort of community protector. Officers report being asked, "Do you know what [terrible things] they have done?" (Church, Wakeman, Miller, et al., 2008;

Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011; Mustaine, Tewksbury, Connor, et al., 2015; Rosselli & Jeglic, 2017). They will then go on to advocate for sex offender notification laws (SORN<sup>2</sup>) despite having little knowledge of their workability (Church, Wakeman, Miller, et al., 2008; Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011; Mustaine, Tewksbury, Connor, et al., 2015). In fact, SORN Laws have been shown to have negative consequences on offenders, and severely hinder their ability to reintegrate into their community (Mustaine, Tewksbury, Connor, et al., 2015). One officer interviewed for this study stated, “I have community members call in to report seeing someone [i.e., a sex offender] at the grocery store, and they need to be arrested. I try to tell them they are human as well and need to eat and wear clothing. We have set parameters for them to be out in the community, and as long as they are within those parameters, there is nothing I can do”.

Officers working the sex offender caseload must remove any personal biases, thoughts, opinions, or preconceived notions regarding the offense or the offender population, to build trust with community members that they will not cause more harm. In larger states such as Wisconsin and Florida, officers working the sex offense caseload have noticed a significant increase in their duties due to negative community perceptions of the sex offenders rooted in SORN Laws (Mustaine, Tewksbury, Connor, et al., 2015). These laws vary from state to state and even from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. While the intent behind these laws is to help lessen the stress on officers, they have often had the opposite effect: expanding their supervisory duties. In Wisconsin, for example, community members are now expecting officers to exert more control over offenders on their caseload; this, in turn, makes their duties even more exhausting and

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<sup>2</sup> SORN Laws or Sex Offender Registration and Notification laws provide stipulations regarding the time frames, the information needed, and update requirements of reporting information on an individual who has been convicted as a sex offender and required to register (Datz, 2007; Conley, Hill, Church, et al., 2011).

intensive (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000). Due to the extensive information offered online regarding individuals on the sex offender registry, officers have had to become more selective on what information is released to the public.

## **Chapter IV: Data sources and Methods**

The Division of Probation and Parole is divided into seven districts (see appendix A for a map of all district locations). Each district is made up of multiple counties, and a single district can encompass hundreds of miles. Each district has a main district office, and some have satellite offices. Each office houses and oversees both (general and specialized caseloads. Within each office, the authority structure consists of supervisors, officers, and other IDOC (Idaho Department of Corrections) employees. Officers in each office are responsible for reporting to in-house supervisors when they are present at the office or when they are in the community conducting supervisory business. IDOC employees not overseeing caseloads are responsible for GPS monitoring and reception duties, among other tasks. They also report to a specific supervisor based on their job description. Of the seven probation districts in Idaho, the administration of districts three, five, and six agreed to participate in this study. These districts serve 20 counties.

Idaho Department of Corrections states that at any given time, there can be 1,000 sex offenders out of an estimated 14,000 offenders under supervision (Probation and Parole Services: Idaho Department of Corrections). Due to the large numbers of sex offenders on surveillance and the limited number of officers assigned to the sex offense caseload (either by choice or out of necessity), caseload numbers can range from 30 offenders to 70 plus offenders per officer. The district in which an officer is working influences how many offenders are assigned to their caseload.

## **Probation and Parole Districts**

### ***District 6***

District Six is based in Pocatello, Idaho, and services six counties. Five of these are considered rural, or are eligible to be considered rural in the next census (Office of Rural Health Policy, 2010). The counties encompassing District 6 include Bannock, Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power. The five rural counties, according to the Office of Rural Health Policy (2010), are Bear Lake, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida, and Power. Pocatello is located in Bannock County, which, according to the Office of Rural Health Policy (2010), is not considered rural entirely.

Bannock County is a unique county because it is generally considered to be metropolitan according to the Office of Budget and Management (USDA ERS, n.d). Pocatello, the only metropolitan area within Bannock County. It is home to 55,193 residents according to 2010 United States Census. Of those 55,193 residents approximately 250 Pocatello residents are on the Idaho Sex Offender Registry (Idaho Sex Offender Registry, 2020). Pocatello houses the District 6 probation and parole office. The town is considered by residents to be conservative. Social services for those affected by homelessness, substance abuse, and other behavioral issues are slim to none. Currently, there is one homeless shelter, one food pantry, one county jail, one women's prison, and one behavioral crisis center. All of the listed resources are often visited by citizens from not only Pocatello, but neighboring cities such as Inkom, Chubbuck, Lava Hot Springs, and Downey. Limited resources make it difficult for sex offenders who are homeless to find adequate resources that are in compliance with their supervision standards.

**Table 1: Judicial District 6**

<b>County</b>	<b>Rural/ Metropolitan</b>	<b>Number of Registered Sex Offenders</b>
Bannock	Metropolitan	288
Bear Lake	Rural	12
Caribou	Rural	28
Franklin	Rural	51
Oneida	Rural	6
Power	Rural	12
		<b>Total: 397</b>

*Idaho Sex Offender Registry Website, 2020*

### ***District 5***

District 5 is based in Twin Falls, Idaho, and services eight counties. All of the counties that makeup district five are considered rural or are eligible to be considered rural in the next census count (Office of Rural Health Policy, 2010). The counties located in District 5 include Blaine, Camas, Cassia, Gooding, Jerome, Lincoln, Minidoka, and Twin Falls. The city of Twin Falls houses the District 5 office. Three sex offense officers service all eight counties. Two officers were willing to participate in this study. The officers described the towns they service as being country urban with little room for sex offenders. Many barriers are similar to those in District 6 include lack of housing and employment.

**Table 2: Judicial District 5**

<b>County</b>	<b>Rural/ Metropolitan</b>	<b>Number of Registered Sex Offenders</b>
Blaine	Rural	13
Camas	Rural	2
Cassia	Rural	64
Gooding	Rural	41
Jerome	Rural	73
Lincoln	Rural	11
Minidoka	Rural	52
Twin Falls	Rural	273
		<b>Total: 529</b>

*Idaho Sex Offender Registry Website, 2020*

### ***District 3***

The District 3 office is based in Caldwell, Idaho. District 3 is composed of six counties. Three of the counties, Adams, Payette, and Washington, are considered rural as of the 2010 census, according to the Office of Rural Health Policy (2010). Counties making up District 3 include Adams, Canyon, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, and Washington counties. Canyon, Gem, and Owyhee are considered metropolitan, with some sub-county areas being rural. Including this district in this study is important due to the fact that this district is located in Caldwell, Idaho, near the capitol city of Boise, Idaho. The office that houses the District 3 officers and offenders is significantly different from District 5 and District 6 due to the fact that this office works closely with a satellite office located in a very small town with less than 7,500 residents. Within



the entire county of Payette, there are 101 registered sex offenders. Within this satellite office, there is one sex offense officer who oversees all 101 registered offenders.

**Table 3: Judicial District 3**

County	Rural/ Metropolitan	Number of Registered Sex Offenders
Adams	Rural	16
Canyon	Metropolitan	810
Gem	Metropolitan	72
Owyhee	Metropolitan	42
Payette	Rural	101
Washington	Rural	45
		<b>Total: 1086</b>

*Idaho Sex Offender Registry Website, 2020*

### ***Interviews***

Officers in each of the three districts were recruited using snowball sampling, secure email, and telephone communication. A total of nine officers participated. The sex offense officer population was attained for District 6. In District 5, two of the three total officers were willing to participate. In District 3, three of the four officers were willing to participate. In Districts 3 and 6, the sex offense supervisors participated. Interviews were arranged via secure email communication. In the event an officer had to reschedule, they were provided with a secure phone number to reach the interviewer.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted. This interview style was decided to be most appropriate because it allowed for officers to supplement their answers with personal narratives that provided more insight into their mental and emotional experiences. The interview

questionnaire consisted of demographic questions, job responsibility questions, personal life impact, and the various ways in which officers address running into offenders in public settings. The complete interview guide can be found in Appendix D of this thesis.

## **Analysis**

Because of the rich information gathered while conducting interviews, “narrative analysis” was used to analyze data. Georgakopoulou (2006) describes narrative analysis as an umbrella-term utilized that captures the stories of interview subjects. Frank (2002) says that these stories told can help us become more familiar with familial education. They also remind us as to why our identities are relevant. Franzosi (2002) asks how the narratives help determine the outcome of future events.

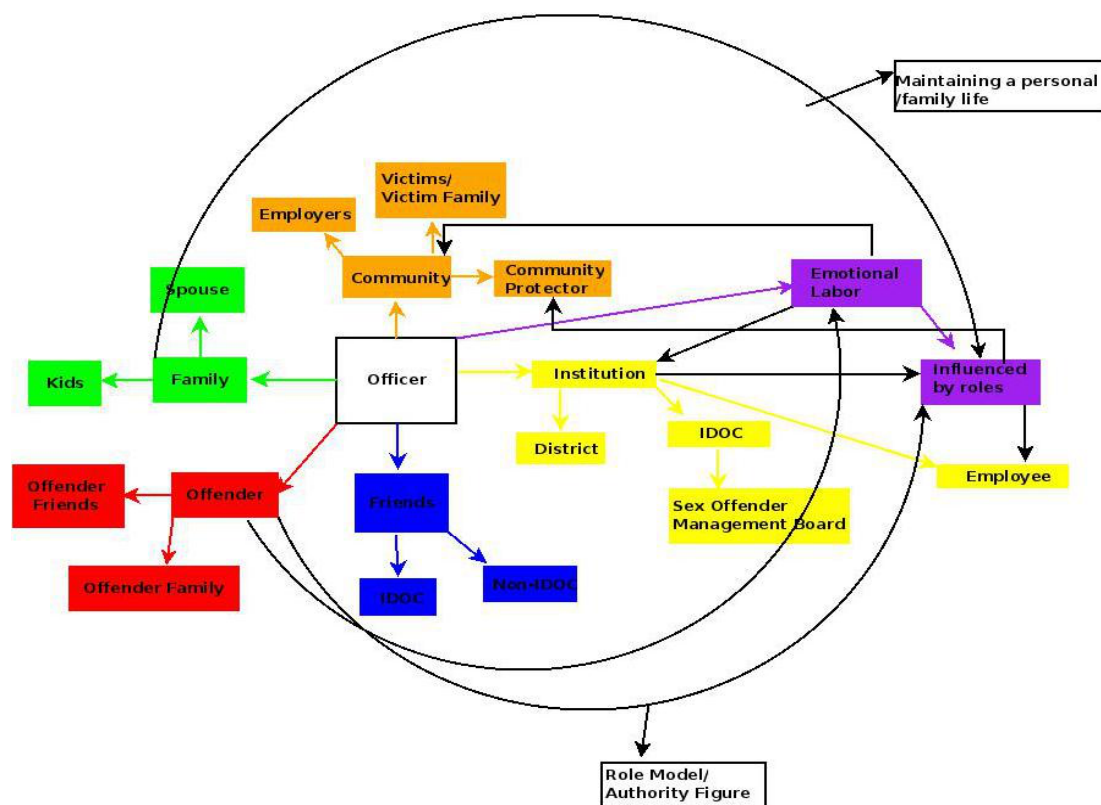
The use of narrative analysis allowed officers to convey their work experiences in an authentic way (Frank, 2002). Rather than relying solely on literature available, we were able to directly test certain hypotheses. It also enabled me to observe commonalities across geographical locations (probation and parole districts) and to make recommendations for future research.

Coding and analysis of the data took place over three separate rounds. The first round of coding was dedicated to looking for specific concepts hypothesized to be present in an officer’s day to day professional and personal life. During the first round of coding, we tried to discover concepts that had not been identified in earlier research. The second round was dedicated to assessing the various roles officers play during the first round of analysis. During this round, the influence of each role(s) was identified. The third round of coding was dedicated to identifying influences of the presence of emotional labor theory, role conflict, and the presentation of self. Process coding was used in rounds two and three to identify actions taken throughout each

officer's experiences. In Vivo, coding was utilized throughout all rounds of coding to extract personal narratives as told by the officers regarding their experiences.

## **Chapter V: Findings**

The probation and parole officers were found to operate within different physical and social contexts, while remaining within the same institutional context. Officers are often out in the community conducting home visits with probationers and parolees, attending training session in various areas of the state, as well as acting as community members. Each social context was found to be accompanied by a specific role played by the officer. These roles often overlapped and cause role confusion. To help discern between them “mind map” has been drafted and included to visualize the roles at hand. You can see in the mind map how many roles officers are responsible for acting in and how they often overlap with one another.



*Figure 1. Mindmap demonstrating the relationships officers form and are required to maintain.*

### Practicing Emotional Labor

Emotional labor and emotional work often overlap and are applied in various situations. Emotional labor is a subset of emotion work. Emotional labor involves the performance of emotion work as part of one's job. It entails managing one's own emotions while simultaneously producing a desired emotional state in a customer or client.

Emotional labor is continuously present throughout interactions with officers simply due to the nature of the offenders they supervise. Sex offenders are perceived by the community as dangerous and not worthy of remaining in the community. Despite this stigma and the officers'

feelings, the participants recognized that their job is to provide and instill a sense of trust with each individual on their caseload, and in turn, develop a relationship where the officer is perceived by the offender as a role model and authority figure. To successfully supervise an individual, an officer must develop and maintain a positive rapport with an offender by being a stable role model. In addition to practicing emotional labor with offenders, officers must also instill emotions of trust and calmness among community members. It was often reported that community members react negatively when offenders are out in the community. Thus, it is up to the officer to remain an advocate for the offender, while also instilling feelings of being a “community protector” among community members.

Part of what makes it so difficult to discern between the three typologies (community protector, offender authoritative figure, and institutional member) the overlap of each typology. Community emotional labor is influenced by the offender emotional labor, and both can be influenced by institutional emotional labor. Each relationship requires very specific types of emotional labor to be performed in order to elicit the required responses from the audience at hand. I am dividing up the emotional labor types to help emphasize the complexity of each relationship necessary for the officers to have in their professional and personal lives. Offender emotional labor is required to invoke emotions of progress, remorse, and hope for the offender’s future. Institutional emotional labor is required to help superiors understand the frustration and lack of guidance officers experience due to inadequate policy revision. Community labor is tasked with helping concerned community members feel at ease and protected through the efforts of the IDOC.

## Community Relationships and Emotional Labor

When asked who the primary stakeholders were, officers often stated that community members are the primary stakeholders. Therefore community members were the priority service population. Maintaining a positive relationship with community members is vital in performing emotional labor.

When performing emotional labor with community members, officers are tasked with helping community members to feel emotions of *trust* and *security*. They want to know that the officers are protecting the community from future crimes. However, these feelings are disrupted occasionally. Officers often stated that these feelings are disrupted when community members see known sex offenders in grocery stores, malls, and other public spaces. The community members feel as if their safety has been invaded by this individual and call to report the sighting.

Safety and trust may also be disrupted when a female commits a sex offense. Due to the rare nature of female sex offenders, officers stated that there are little to no resources for intervention housing when in-between sentencing and the initial committing of the crime. Because of the lack of intervention housing, female sex offenders are often placed back into the home with the victim or potential other victims. Community members experience outrage and anger when this is brought to their attention via media. Officers stated this leaves members feeling as if their safety has been violated due to this individual being placed back into the home within a neighborhood. Officers reported that often female sex offenders are not required to register and are charged with lesser crimes.

*"BURGLARY! Yeah, burglary, he isn't lying like it gets plead down to burglary. Its because they entered the home with the intent to do something to another person sexually."*

*"Very, very few [housing options] for female sex offenders, which makes it very slim. We have zero housing for them. We have nowhere to put them. Sometimes we are forced to put them back in the home with potential victims because we have nowhere to put them. Its either we put them there, or we put them back in jail until we figure something else out which we have done as well. But no housing for females [sex offenders]."*

When faced with angry and frightened community members, officers work to perform emotional labor by instilling and producing feelings of safety, security, and trust. This emotional labor is attained by walking the member through the safeguards put in place to allow the offender to partake in regular community activities, such as grocery shopping while remaining on a rigid supervision schedule. Officers are tasked with performing emotional labor towards community members is when they express concern regarding an offender's living situations. When it becomes known to community members, an offender is living on a certain block or apartment complex, their sense of safety is disrupted once more. Officers stated that this is often due to community members not having realized that the individual is living so close and/or having allowed children to play outside near the offender's home. Officers have to address the disruption of safety, solitude, and trust experienced by the member and replace the emotions of fear with those emotions of safety, solitude, and trust once more.

*"...so if there's something near that residence they want to live at and the Idaho State Police says no, ok we have to find something else now where do we go? Or if they want to*



*live in an apartment complex and the management says 'No we don't take sex offenders. There's families there.'"*

*"It's frustrating for them too [female sex offenders]. You gotta think about it from the families' standpoint. Do I want to have a registered sex offender living around me?"*

Officers noted throughout interviews that there are many challenges they face when helping community members to feel that their safety is not in jeopardy with an offender residing and shopping in the same areas as they are. Community members are recognized as the important stakeholders by IDOC and individual officers. Officers work to help mitigate those feelings of fear by helping the community member to understand the parameters of the supervision while still maintaining the offender's anonymity. All of the districts have an open door communications policy with the community.

*"I haven't seen a lot of difference, depending on your caseload, as to how you're treated in the community as a PO. Obviously there are people who will pipe up or voice their opinion... 'I can't believe you do that. They should be in jail.' For the most part the community is supportive in what we do. We do very, we spend a lot of time doing a very good job, I think we do a very good job, a lot of the time is spent answering the phone just from citizens who, having that conversation with and telling them, explaining to them what our role is, what our responsibilities are, and what we are trying to do and what our end goal is."*

*"I mean, I get calls all the time of 'I saw so and so at the grocery store I know they are a registered sex offender. It's a violation of his probation! You need to come arrest them right now.' A lot of time it is a victim's family who's watching that person very closely. It*

*takes a certain amount of tact [emotional labor] and explanation to explain they are humans they have to buy groceries, they have to eat, we limit the times when they can go, and we are watching them closely, but at the same time I realize it's very personal to you, we're choosing to work with this person."*

In addition to upholding an open door communication policy, legislation is in place that dictates where and when offenders can go and even reside and work. Helping community members to understand these pieces of legislation helps to produce those feelings of safety, security, and trust among probation and parole officers.

Overall, officers stated throughout the interviews that community members generally perceive them as being community protectors. The officers strive to work in and fulfill those roles. The officers often stated that this perception drove them to be sure they cover their bases with documentation when they conduct home visits, work visits, and even office meetings with offenders.

*"When that does occur they are encouraged, the officer, they are encouraged to educate the family and remind the family that there are many safeguards put in place to ensure that they or any other member of their family will not be victimized again but that the individual who committed against them does also not to function among society."*

*"Our number one goal is community safety. Our priority goal number 1 is the community stakeholder. We want to make sure they are safe."*

*"Compared to other caseloads on that community safety thing, most of our violations we submit to the court are technical violations. There's no new crimes we are aware of. It*

*usually is behavior that could lead to new crimes that we are preemptively wanting to stop.”*

### **Offender Relationships and Emotional Labor**

Officers work to produce emotions with offenders they supervise. Officers often experience difficulty producing these emotions, particularly female sex offenders. This is due to the grooming practices performed by females and general feelings of disgust towards the offense committed. Officers have to work to produce trust and mentorship among offenders on their caseload to help them successfully go through supervision, treatment, and ultimately reentry into the community.

In order to produce feelings of trust and guidance among clients, officers work through many challenges that complicate communication and supervision. Offenders often attempt to use manipulation and grooming techniques on officers when they are first brought onto the caseload. Officers reported that statements made to them indicating they look nice today, are a nice person, or even compliments on family should be taken as grooming attempts and addressed as such. Male officers reported that they often avoid supervising female offenders at all costs because females have been found to be excessively manipulative.

*“Usually, when you see the sex offender, they’re not high when they commit their offense.*

*I mean, they’re sober, and this is something they’re choosing to do in their normal state of mind. And so they’re so manipulating and just that they’re deviant and not... you know they’re not nice people.”*

*“And if you don’t realize that [grooming techniques] you just think oh, they’re really, what a great guy, look at what he’s doing, look at how nice he is, things I don’t know I would have thought beforehand and now when you look at it you’re like, yeah.”*

*“Essentially, you have to be on higher alert than the already high alert and be able to recognize when those manipulations may be attempted on you and make sure you protect yourself from those sorts of interactions.”*

*“When it comes to supervising female sex offenders, I prefer not to do it because they are very manipulative. They know how they can get away with manipulating men.”*

Officers also run into difficulty in developing rapport due to the extreme isolation offenders experience. Officers reported that offenders can succumb to the negative stigma associated with their crimes. Inability to be with their children, and worry about the perception their family and friends now have of them, so they choose to eliminate themselves socially from the world. They may go to extreme lengths of isolation that include closing bank accounts, deleting themselves off of social media (supervision standards do not permit usage of social media), and refusing to have contact with family and friends. Officers viewed this as an opportunity to begin to develop a strong rapport with their clients, and engage in emotional labor by developing emotions of trust, mentorship, and acceptance with their clients.

*“Yeah, it’s like they need you know an outlet too and they don’t, a lot of them feel ostracized from the community or isolated from friends and they like to then distance themselves you know before even giving themselves the opportunity to talk to someone. They know like when I come in my door, they can talk to me. They understand that I already know, and I think the fear of people potentially knowing their crime scares them*

*from interacting. So in here, it's like informed for them because I know they understand that file, that file drawer has everything their whole history from day one."*

When helping offenders refrain from complete and total isolation from society, the officers often run into a problem that they have to navigate for themselves. Officers are viewed by offenders as authorities, but also as role models of how to appropriately act within society. Officers have to engage in a unique type of emotional labor as an *authoritative* figure rather than solely an *authority* figure. This involves showing the offender they are advocating for them when community members call in to report sightings at grocery stores. Along with helping them find appropriate treatment and a treatment provider, officers help them find housing and employment. Additionally, officers must present in an authoritative way when the offender comes into the office for meetings when the officer goes out on home visits, work visits, and even when the offender reoffends (either sexually or in a general sense).

For many of the officers, acting in their authoritative roles with offenders includes helping the offender to find housing and employment that is within state law parameters. Offices often have to help offenders navigate through negative stigma when neighbors learn about their past. Officers may also need to help students deal with potential termination from an employment position due to the offender's past. To help mitigate these negative reactions, officers continue to advocate for the client by meeting with potential employers to discuss what the supervision entails. Officers also emphasize how employers can positively influence an offender's supervision. When it comes to housing, officers have to be a bit more creative. Due to Idaho sex offender housing laws, anyone who is listed on the registry cannot live within 500 feet of an area that is considered to have potential victims (schools, churches, parks, etc.). This leaves offenders with minimal housing choices. Public shelters may not be an option due to stipulations

that vary from county to county, stating that no more than three offenders can be in the same dwelling at one time. There is not much that officers can do for offenders when housing is nonexistent other than place them back into jail/prison or encourage their family to help them out by putting them up into a hotel room. Officers stated that once the offender is either incarcerated or in a hotel room with a physical address, they can register and work with them to find housing for the offender.

*“For us, a lot of it is what contacts do we have in the community that we can forward them into. ...When it comes to housing its very, very difficult and mainly what we do is, we can obtain them a month’s rent at one of the daily motels we have in the area, and we have one that’s here in Twin Falls, the Old Town Lodge, and sometimes that’s not the best place for them because there’s a lot of drug trafficking in that area. It’s basically in a way we are setting them up for failure.”*

*“So when it comes to housing what I do is, I’ve been trying to compile a list of different places that I know they will rent out to sex offenders, and so far on that list I have is like three people that can assist them.”*

*“It’s also hard because I have to help them find treatment, and housing is very limited. Nobody wants to give them a house, we have two transitional houses, and that’s \$400 a month for a room.”*

*“And sometimes they offend on each other [in transitional housing], but as far as resources, it’s the dichotomy of they don’t want anything to do with offenders [public, legislation officials, etc.] but the reality is that they get out and then it’s like, hey we don’t want to put money towards sex offenders. They don’t want to study it... they don’t want...*

*no one wants to put money towards sex offenders. And unfortunately, that might prohibit better treatment, better outcome, but the idea of people putting money into it and it's difficult for individuals."*

In addition to the various mitigation strategies listed above, officers also have access to various empirical assessments and pre-sentence investigation documents to help understand their clients. This can help to develop the authoritative relationship. Emphasizing during one of the first interactions that there are no secrets is one way that many officers reported to help positively build that relationship

Additionally, officers also recognized that much of the time, they are the only individuals left in the client's environment who do not perceive them (at least outwardly) as terrible persons. Allowing offenders to come into their offices and making supervision progress and to vent is crucial to helping them realize that the officer is on their side.

*"They are still human beings, and they still have to be treated as humans and respected. I try to not focus on the crime the lines blur sometimes. I try to use it as a reference as to what they are capable of, but at the same time, when I deal with an offender, I remember first and foremost they are a human being and to treat them with the utmost respect."*

This type of relationship also impacts the officer. In the midst of producing proper emotions from their clients, officers run a relatively high risk of experiencing secondary victimization from actions and statements made by offenders.

*"This year, I had severe panic attacks to the point where I have been out in the field, and just because I have so much on the back burner, I guess you could say sometimes I start having these panic attacks and it has affected me so much to the point where one time I was with my field partner and I asked him to pull over because I was feeling very, very*

*nauseous and he did not pull over in time, and I ended up projectile vomiting everywhere.”*

These negative reactions stem from producing emotional labor among community members, institutional members, and offenders. Officers have to access and examine every aspect of the offender's case file, which often includes in-depth descriptions of the crime committed. The consumption of these details in their rawest form often allows the officer and their audience to connect on a deeper level and to begin to develop trust, particularly with the offender. However, these details often leave the officer emotionally injured. Officers report that they have isolated themselves from family and friends, so they do not have to think about the why behind the offense. They report questioning how appropriate it is for them to change their infant child's diaper and report fear of turning to alcohol and drugs as a means of coping.

*“It has happened at work where sometimes I have to excuse myself and go to the restroom and you know throw up because it's... sometimes what we do to decompress... it's not enough and I really don't want to turn to alcohol and other things that are detrimental to myself.”*

*“I remember even one time even when you're learning to change diapers and stuff like... Oh my god is this inappropriate for me to clean my daughter when I'm changing her diaper and you sit there and think no that's totally normal.”*

### **Institutional Relationships and Emotional Labor**

An aspect that proved to be very important in producing emotional labor for community members and offenders is the officer's relationships within the Idaho Department of Corrections. Officers are required to answer to more than just their direct supervisor. They must also answer



to other officers (general and sex offense officers), department directors, and the Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB). Often when answering to various individuals institutionally, there are challenges involved with such interactions

Officers often seek support from other officers who work their caseload. This is more challenging for officers in small-town areas because there are fewer co-workers to provide support. Support for officers goes beyond having someone to talk to about the difficulty of supervising the sex offense caseload, and it also entails having someone to meet with your clients if you are caught up handling another case that requires your undivided attention. Officers often report that they find it difficult to access this type of support because the sex offense caseload has to be kept between officers with sex offense caseloads. This is due to the extra parameters of supervision and the need to be aware of offenders' grooming and manipulation tactics. There is a significant amount of concern that if an offender reoffends, the community will become heavily involved, thus breaking the trust built between officers and community members.

*"I can't speak for other officers or another unit, but we the sex offense caseload officers, we all interact like a puzzle, and we put pieces down and keep moving, and that's the way we have done it."*

*"If something really calls for attention, and if I'm not here in the morning and there's somebody who comes in [offender], one of the other sex offense officers will see them for me. Of if you have someone here and you have to take a call, someone else [sex offense officer] can step in for each other, it's really not that big of a deal. That's the easy part right there."*

*“So we are each other’s resource and each other’s outlet, and if we are struggling with something, we talk to each other.”*

Officers also seek out support with regard to supervision choices from their superiors, most often their direct supervisors. This often is in the form of monetary support for offenders unable to financially support themselves in their housing situation. Officers reported that in some scenarios, they could request 30 days of paid housing for offenders who are just coming out of prison so that they can have a physical address to register under. Any financial support after that point is essentially nonexistent. This is a huge stressor to officers with regard to performing emotional labor for offenders because the officer cannot find financial help for an offender who is being told the only remaining option is to go back to prison for not having housing. Officers find their relationship with superiors strained when this happens. However, officers did note they felt support from their direct supervisors with regard to their supervision choices. One officer mentioned this is significant for them because they are the ones interacting with offenders daily, and know what makes them tick and behave. Having their direct supervisor stand behind them allows the officer to work more to develop a stronger relationship of trust and rapport with offenders, which in turn helps the community feel safe because the officer has “control” over the offender.

With regard to feelings of support from the Department of Corrections, officers expressed frustration and lack of support. This is due to the fact that many officers were told to read the policy on sex offender supervision and ask questions if they had any. The issue they often found with the current policy is that it is outdated and does not reflect current offending trends they see on their caseload.

*"We have an outdated sex offender policy. That has not been updated since 2015 that is currently being updated. Even in the South, it was read the policy, but if you have questions, ask. Thank god I had that experience coming into here."*

*"We don't have standard training to go off of. If this person does this, then you do this. The only training I remember getting was how to perform the Static-99, Stable-2007. The assessments we use to determine their supervision level other than that read the policy and do the contact standards and ask questions."*

It is unclear how much direct support officers receive from superiors above direct supervisors. Officers did state that the Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB) is responsible for setting supervision standards pertaining to sex offenders. Officers stated a few consistent challenges they face pertaining to feeling and receiving support from SOMB. Due to the lack of policy update and supervision standard update from SOMB officers have had to rely on their abilities to assess various situations and still maintain supervision standards. All the while helping the client move to a more positive space as it pertains to their living, working, and social environments. As of 2019, SOMB has heard and begun to acknowledge frustration from officers and the lack of policy updates. Currently, SOMB is working to propose and vote on a new adult and juvenile supervision standards. It is unclear how this action has affected probation and parole officers due to the proposals still being under construction. Various ways in which officers feel support or no support has shown to be directly connected to the resources they have available to offenders, and ultimately influencing the emotional labor practiced institutionally throughout the Idaho Department of Corrections.

In order to continue to garner the policy change support from directors and direct supervisors, officers must instill various types of emotional labor in various entities associated

with the Idaho Department of Corrections. Officers must instill feelings of accomplishment in their superiors and members of SOMB. These feelings of accomplishment and community protection are instilled by continuous emotional and physical work done by officers. By reducing recidivism rates as well as providing successful supervision and community reintegration to offenders throughout the judicial districts in Idaho. Instilling these feelings of accomplishment is a hard task for officers because of the overwhelming caseload sizes assigned to each officer. Officers reported having a caseload size anywhere from 60-80+ offenders. Officers stated that their ideal caseload sizes are roughly 20-30 offenders. As a result of the overwhelmingly large caseload sizes, officers often experience burnout, especially in smaller districts where there are only two to four active sex offense officers. Despite having support regarding supervision techniques from direct supervisors, officers report feelings of frustration towards the department as a whole for lack of funding and resources for officers to call upon when trying to help an offender find housing and employment. Officers also report feelings of frustration for the lack of social services working in tandem with officers for sex offenders. Sex offense officers describe also acting in the role of a case manager in addition to acting as a societal mentor for the client.

*“...You have to be employed because there are costs of living, being able to pay for drug tests, being able to pay for your treatment, being able to pay for polygraphs, the self-care that comes into that you know the self-care for the offender. Basically, when they are not employed, or they are struggling to find employment, they tend to fall apart, and they are not successful on supervision, and in a way when they offender is not successful, we as the officer are not successful. What did we miss as a PO, what direction did we not take with them, so it does impact us in a way.”*

*“We case manage their asses!”*

*“The best way to describe us is a case manager with a gun. This caseload is far more intensive than the general caseload.... You have to do this, you have to come see me so many times a month, you have to polygraph and drug test, we have paperwork and chaperones, consent, and chaperone background.”*

Two main factors played a key role in how officers view the frustration and stress they are under having such large caseloads. Officers who had served time in the military or US Marshall service were less lenient with supervision standards and seemed to less affected outwardly by the overwhelming caseload sizes and tasks associated with the supervision of sex offenders. Officers with no military or US Marshall’s Service background were more lenient with supervision standards (allowing for waivers of supervision fees, reduced polygraph fees, later polygraph dates, among others). Non-military officers/ US Marshalls also stated to be more outwardly affected by the caseload sizes and case management tasks. One officer stated they become physically sick almost daily when at work due to the crime type and stress accompanied with sex offense supervision.

**Table 4: Officer Supervision Types**

Officer Supervision Types	
<b>Military/No Military</b>	<b>Supervision Type</b>
Military History	Strict, no wiggle room, “by the book,” less willing to work with the offender in terms of finances.
No Military History	More wiggle room, less strict on supervision/polygraph fees, willing to work more with the offender in terms of finances.
U.S. Marshall History	Strict, no wiggle room, “by the book,” less willing to work with the offender in terms of finances.
No U.S. Marshall History	More wiggle room, less strict on supervision/polygraph fees, willing to work more with the offender in terms of finances.

The officer who becomes physically ill almost every day has also states that he had previously worked with child victims of sexual crimes. This officer work in Las Vegas school districts with students who had been caught up in the legal system because there were either victims of a sexual crime or committed a crime as a result of being victimized. This officer stated his motivation behind going into adult sex offender supervision was to be the next step, the “what happens after these children graduate from the school system.”

## **Discussion**

The findings throughout this study suggest that officers who supervise the sex offense caseload throughout Idaho often find themselves in perplexing situations geographically. Officers supervising clients who live in small communities are more likely to run into offenders on their caseloads within the community, challenging the officers' community emotional labor. Officers have to treat the offenders on their caseload as community members and prevent backlash towards the offender by keeping the type of relationship secret from community

members. Rural area travel for officers was not seen to be a significant stressor of the supervision process throughout data analysis.

Additional findings also suggest officers are experiencing multiple forms of stress each day, mainly due to the lack of funding and community resources for sex offense clients. Clients are required to pay for their own living expenses, in addition to paying for sex offender treatment, polygraphs, and registration fees. These expenses can add up to be over \$600 monthly, in addition to living expenses. Offenders on the sex offense caseload often experience difficulty in urban areas finding employment and housing. This was shown to be due to the negative connotations associated with a sex offender status.

This study introduced concepts of probation and parole research that have rarely been researched. Future research is encouraged to take the information presented here and apply it in developing empirical measures, tailored to local Department of Corrections, to allow the tracking and monitoring of officer mental states to alleviate negative coping techniques. Future research is also encouraged to assess barriers mentioned, such as financial, housing, and employment issues, to investigate how each impacts officers directly and provide guidance on how to best proceed with little to no resources.

Political research is encouraged to utilize the evidence presented in this study to begin to guide public policy as it pertains to implementing methods of monitoring, tracking, and aiding in officer mental health and mental health issues.

## **Conclusion**

Probation and Parole officers are affected in larger ways than previously noted. This study allowed for personal narratives depicting the everyday struggles officers face to be exposed and challenged the initial concepts of Emotional Labor theory. Evidence from this study

suggests that more attention needs to be given to assessing all officer mental and emotional states to uphold positive officer-offender interactions and continue to decrease levels of recidivism among sex offenders. It is imperative that future scholars continue to assess the various issues and barriers to allow for more resources and supports to be put into place so that officers do not continue to turn to harmful vices to cope with their vital duties within their communities.



## Appendix A



*Figure 2. Map of Idaho Judicial Districts, <https://www.5thjudicialdistrict.com>*

## **Appendix B**

**This interview is structured in a semi-structured format. At any time please feel free to elaborate on any answers with personal accounts, stories, etc.**

**Please refrain from speaking specifically about offenders you are currently supervising, or using any identifying information pertaining to them.**

### **Demographics**

1. How long have you been in service?
  1. What other areas, if any, have you served in?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your marital status?

### **About the officer**

1. What is your education level?
  1. At what point in your education, when did you begin learning about sex offenders and decide this is the type of career you wanted to pursue?
2. What is your political affiliation if any?
  1. How does this impact your attitudes towards sex offenders?
3. What religion do you practice?
  1. How does this impact your attitudes towards sex offenders?

### **Personal views on Sex Offenders**

1. Prior to working with sex offenders, what were your personal views regarding the type of offense?
  1. Did it differ from one type of offender to another?
  2. How did those feelings develop?
2. Where did you first learn about sex offenders?
  1. schooling, media, family/friend interactions, etc.
  2. How did they impact your personal views of sex offenders?
3. Since working with sex offenders, how have your feelings and views towards them changed?
  1. Have they increased?

1. If so in what ways?
2. Have they decreased?
  1. If so, how?
  2. Why?
  3. What caused your change of heart?

### **Supervising Sex Offender Impacts on Personal Relationships**

1. How does the work you do on a daily basis affect your personal life?
  1. Your immediate family?
    1. spouse, kids, etc.
  2. Interactions with friends
2. How do you maintain separation from your professional life to your work life?
  1. Are you on constant call?
    1. If so, when you are called how do you mentally prepare yourself to interact suddenly with an offender?
    2. Once your call is complete, how do you return to that separation of professional and personal life?
3. How has the small number of officers that work with sex offenders affected your ability to work with offenders under your supervision?
  1. How has that affected you emotionally?

### **Supervising Sex Offender Impacts on Professionalism**

1. What is the most common type of SO on probation?
  1. Violent offender, sex with minors, etc.
2. How has your interactions with sex offenders affected your interactions with conventional or traditional offenders?
  1. Do you find yourself more sympathetic with them
  2. Do you find you are harsher on traditional offenders?
3. How has the small number of officers that work with sex offenders affected your ability to work with offenders under your supervision?
  1. How has that affected you emotionally?

2. Do you find you have to hide certain emotions, facial expressions, etc.
4. How are you able to transition yourself physically and mentally from meeting with one offender who may not be violent to meeting with another offender with a violent offense?
5. Have you ever had an unplanned, uncontrolled interaction with an offender under your supervision?
  1. In what type of setting did this interaction take place?
  2. How did you react?
  3. How did family/friends/ bystanders around you react?
  4. Did the interaction damage your professional relationship with the offender?

### **District/ State Assistance in Supervising Sex Offenders**

1. How has the district aided in helping you with managing your caseload?
2. Have you received any specialized trainings in working with sex offenders prior to beginning your case load?
3. How has the department of corrections helped you with managing your caseload?
4. What specialized trainings have you received since you have started supervising sex offenders?
  1. Can you tell me about the training
  2. When was the last time you attended these types of trainings?
  3. Did you feel that the trainings were comprehensive and prepared you for any sort of situation?
  4. How old was the material presented in the study?

### **Participation in the Current Study**

5. In terms of rural Idaho probation and parole, what research has been conducted here that you are aware of?
  1. If any, are you aware of their results from those studies?
  2. How have those studies been applicable to District 6 specifically?
  3. How have those studies not been applicable to District 6 specifically?
6. What is your vision for participating in this research project?

7. In what ways do you feel trainings or education could be more helpful to officers supervising sex offenders?
8. In what ways do you feel the department or district could offer more mental health support for officers who supervise sex offenders?

**Wrap Up Questions**

9. Is there anything else you would like to talk about or any previous questions you would like to discuss further?
10. Considering the small number of specific SO officers working with offenders, would you be willing to help in what is called “snowball sampling”?

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