

Probation and Parole Officer Communication Style as an Antecedent to Reactance, Self-Efficacy, and Restoration of Freedom for Drug- and Alcohol-Involved Women on Probation and Parole

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Importance of Probation and Parole Officer Relationship to Female Offenders

- Probation and Parole Officers constitute important members of offenders' social networks
 - Close relationships with POs have been shown to result in less risky behaviors
 - PO's job is to use persuasion to get women to live within societal rules, and in this case to avoid drug or alcohol use
 - POs can use different communication styles with clients
- **Conversational Style** – encourages open communication on a variety of topics
- **Conformity Style** – reflects obedience to authority

Self-Efficacy to Resist Drugs and Alcohol and Reactance as a result of PO Communication Style led to self-reported use and violation patterns

- **Self-efficacy** - the belief in being able to achieve one's personal desired outcomes
- **Reactance** - perception that being able to think, feel, or act freely in the way that one desires is being threatened.
- Both of these psychological states are important as they lead can to drug and alcohol avoidance or use
 - Conversational communication style enhanced self-efficacy to avoid drugs and lessened reactance which led to lower self-reported use and fewer violations.
 - Conformity communication style lowered self-efficacy to avoid drugs and increased reactance which led to higher self-reported use and more violations.

Our Sample

- N=250 women (drug and/or alcohol-involved) who had not changed POs during the course of the study

Type of Supervision	Probation	Parole	Both
Number of Women	189	59	2

- Mean age 34
- Racially/ethnically diverse
49% white, 36.6% black, with others Native American and multiple races.
Many reported being Hispanic.

Practical Application

- ✓ Using a **conversational** communication style in which you supply offenders with information, referrals, and support may increase offenders' self-efficacy to avoid drugs and decrease reactance and drug and alcohol use and violations.
- ✓ Using a **conformity** community style by using orders and threats may lower self-efficacy to avoid drugs and alcohol and increase violations.