

International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology

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Int J Offender Ther Comp Criminol 2014 58: 1389 originally published online 18 June 2013

DOI: 10.1177/0306624X13491933

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International Journal of
Offender Therapy and
Comparative Criminology
2014, Vol. 58(11) 1389–1407
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DOI: 10.1177/0306624X13491933
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Abstract

The discourse regarding offender rehabilitation has been criticized by various scholars who have claimed that reducing negative causes and managing risk will not automatically prompt positive human development and elements that are associated with desistance. Positive criminology is an innovative concept that challenges the common preoccupation with negative elements, by placing emphasis on human encounters and forces of inclusion that are experienced positively by target individuals and that can promote crime desistance. However, as the concept is relatively new, there are still no guiding principles for the practice of positive criminology that could direct research and the criminal justice system. This article attempts to fill that gap by providing principles that could be practiced by criminal justice personnel and examples of different interventions that reflect positive criminology. The article also provides ideological explanations for adopting the concept of positive criminology in practice.

Keywords

desistance, positive criminology, positive psychology, rehabilitation, self-centeredness, social inclusion

Recently, an innovative concept referred to as “positive criminology” has been introduced in the field of criminology (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). Positive criminology (not to be confused with “positivistic criminology”) is a field within criminology that is concerned with responses to crime and interventions for those involved (offenders, victims, relatives, community members, and representatives of society). It offers a perspective that targets common principles within different theories, approaches, and

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models. This perspective places emphasis on forces of integration and social inclusion that are experienced positively by target individuals and groups, and that can help these individuals or groups refrain from crime and deviance (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013; Ronel & Toren, 2012). In essence, positive criminology argues that positive experiences and forces of social inclusion have a healing effect and their influence is at least as strong as negative ones, and as the experience of social exclusion (Braithwaite, 1989; Elisha, Idisis, & Ronel, 2011). These experiences of social inclusion, and other integrating forces at the individual, social, and spiritual level, may contribute to positive change within the individual or group and foster a reduction in negative emotions such as distress, as well as enhance positive individual development and desistance from crime and deviance (Ronel et al., 2013). In short, positive criminology holds three core themes: (a) an accentuated orientation toward integration at any level (individual, social, and spiritual), (b) achievement of this integration by means of forces and effects that target individuals' experience as positive, and (c) the belief that these forces and effects might assist individuals or groups in refraining from crime and deviance (Ronel & Toren, 2012).

Positive criminology is an adaptation of the positive psychology perspective, which focuses on how to enhance happiness and well-being and runs counter to the traditional focus in psychology on how to reduce mental illness and other disorders (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), for the purpose of criminology. Positive psychology and positive criminology have shifted away from the notion of conceiving of an individual as containing a set of problems that "need to be fixed." Rather, they promote a more holistic view, which acknowledges that thriving and disengagement from distress, addiction, mental illness, crime, or deviance might be fostered more effectively by enhancing positive emotions and experiences, rather than focusing on reducing negative attributes (Duckworth, Steen, & Seligman, 2005). Although similar, positive criminology also differs from positive psychology. In particular, it suggests that crime prevention and desistance are desired outcomes of positive experiences. Moreover, positive criminology encourages the use of different resources—including some that are not psychological in nature—to achieve desistance from crime. Examples are sociological means or the criminal justice system and its personnel.

As a concept, positive criminology has been presented in several articles (see for example, Elisha et al., 2011; Ronel & Elisha, 2011; Ronel et al., 2013; Ronel & Toren, 2012). In addition, other past and current research has demonstrated how the enhancement of positive components (such as acceptance, altruism, positive modeling, hope, self-efficacy, and spirituality) can promote changes within individuals who foster positive development and encourage crime desistance (Cherry, 2005; LeBel, Burnett, Maruna, & Bushway, 2008; Ronel et al., 2013). In fact, many existing theories, interventions, and models can be associated with the concept of positive criminology and may reflect the three core themes noted above (Elisha et al., 2011). For example, restorative justice is a view that reflects positive criminology by emphasizing the social inclusion of offenders and victims, and bringing the offender, victim, and community together to discuss the harm done by the crime, and how the offender might repair it (Gray, 2005). The experience of restorative justice is intended to be positive

and constructive by “awakening” the offender to the harm done and involving this individual in a discussion on how he or she might take responsibility, repair the harm, and, in turn, experience social integration (Hayes & Daly, 2003). Restorative justice thus implies an intervention that (a) has an accentuated direction toward social integration, (b) applies a positive and constructive experience, and (c) may thereby assist individuals in refraining from crime. It is also considered an experience that encourages the recovery process of the victim, so that it is also consistent with positive victimology principles (Ronel & Toren, 2012).

Desistance is another field of study that can reflect positive criminology. Indeed, desistance literature has discussed, for example, positive emotions, such as a feeling of hope and a sense of self-efficacy, as important components in desistance from crime (see Burnett & Maruna, 2004; LeBel et al., 2008; Martin & Stermac, 2010). Theories of desistance also discuss social inclusion as an important component in the offender’s ability to resettle in the community (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Maruna, 2012; Weaver & McNeill, 2007).

The “sociology of acceptance” is another example that falls under the concept of positive criminology and refers to the relationship between an individual who possesses “deviant” traits and one who does not (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987). This relationship is characterized by elements such as closeness and affection, lack of stigmatization, altruism, and appreciation. Some researchers have suggested that such a relationship can promote the process of social reintegration, impress upon an individual positive behaviors and attitudes, and thus promote rehabilitation (Braithwaite, 2000; Elisha et al., 2011).

Still another example is therapeutic jurisprudence (Wexler, 2012), which is defined as an interdisciplinary approach to legal processes that has a law reform agenda. Therapeutic jurisprudence is applied in an effort to increase the therapeutic consequences of the law and its judicial implementation and to decrease its counter-therapeutic consequences. It involves the use of social science tools to evaluate the level of the law’s therapeutic effects, with the aim of reshaping law and legal processes in ways that can promote the emotional well-being and the psychological performance of those affected. Recently, therapeutic jurisprudence was defined by one of its creators as having a symbiotic relationship with positive criminology, based on their complete compatibility (Wexler, 2013).

Positive criminology also offers a phenomenological understanding of crime and provides a common phenomenological factor that is exhibited almost in any form and phase of criminal, deviant, violent, or addictive behavior. Specifically, positive criminology suggests that self-centeredness is a phenomenological factor associated with most criminal conduct under most circumstances (Elkind, 1967; Lukas, 1988; Ronel, 2000). Self-centeredness describes a state of consciousness in which an individual focuses almost exclusively on his or her own personal wishes, interests, perceived needs, expectations, desires or risks, rage, fears and emotions, and cognitions, while essentially ignoring those of others (Ronel, 2011). In this state of consciousness, individuals experience a sense of existential, social, and spiritual alienation or separation, so that others are perceived as object-like. Simultaneously, one’s sense of threat or

desire is perceived to be existential and a basic need that must be satisfied. Usually, it involves some repression of awareness that makes any socially presented action possible, including violent or offending ones. Although all individuals become self-absorbed at times, a self-centered phase is an intensified state in which self-centeredness occupies almost the whole consciousness and becomes the leading motive of action. For desistance and recovery to occur, it is necessary to cultivate a growing ability to step away from self-centered motives, reasoning, and conduct. Positive criminology holds the potential to increase individuals' capability to step away from self-centeredness through the application of positive experiences that might reduce the urgency to satisfy their existential needs.

In essence, positive criminology provides a concept that serves as the basis for a paradigm by which to conduct criminological research and operate a criminal justice system. Criminological research might benefit from focusing their attention on, for example, various criminal justice innovations and the manner in which these innovations can be experienced positively, as well as how that positive experience might play a role in the desistance process. However, the concept is new and as yet there are no practice principles defined by positive criminology that can direct research and the criminal justice system. In this article, we propose to fill that gap. Other articles on positive criminology have focused on introducing the concept (see, for example, Ronel & Elisha, 2011), providing empirical support for the theory (see, for example, Ronel et al., 2013), or comparing it with parallel perspectives (Wexler, 2013). In this article, we use past research and literature to expand on the criminological discourse regarding positive criminology and suggest ways in which the theory can be applied in practice. Specifically, we present principles for practice that reflect the concept of positive criminology and may be experienced positively by target individuals, promote within-individual changes, and enhance desistance. We will propose principles for practice that rely on various components and practice techniques that, some of them, already exist. Thus, we will place them within a broader framework of positive criminology. By doing this, we hope to emphasize the manner in which various components and practice techniques reflect positive criminology and, in turn, may encourage collaboratively developed practice techniques that can be utilized within that broader framework. Some of these principles rely on research conducted in positive criminology and existing theories, interventions, and models that reflect positive criminology. Some of the suggested components still require further investigation and research. We chose to include both types of components to provide a direction for future research. Before presenting the practice principles and discussing *what* is suggested by positive criminology when dealing with offenders, it is important to first explain the ideology behind it: *why* it is suggested.

“Why”: The Ideology of Applying Positive Criminology

Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, and Vohs (2001) claimed that human relationships are affected to a greater extent by negative experiences and encounters than they are by positive ones. Thus, they claimed that negative experiences have a stronger impact on individuals than positive ones. It seems that a large amount of research is

preoccupied with the negative elements and effects that influence the individual and prompt criminal behavior, addiction, and other disorders (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). It also seems that treatment toward offenders is preoccupied with reducing and managing risk (Ward & Maruna, 2007; Ward & Stewart, 2010). However, a growing number of scholars have started questioning this excessive preoccupation with “the negative” in research and clinical practice (see, for example, Maruna, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Ward & Stewart, 2010). In particular, the rise of positive psychology has alerted researchers that positive experiences are not secondary to negative ones and that concentrating on an individual’s abilities, as well as fostering positive emotions, may help to alleviate emotional difficulties and undo its root causes (Akhtar & Boniwell, 2010; Duckworth et al., 2005; Whitehead, Ward, & Collie, 2007). This relatively new understanding reflects a core value in positive criminology and provides the first reason why the application of positive criminology in research and practice can be beneficial. Namely, *by the very enhancing of the positive, one can reduce the negative* (Ronel, 2006). That is, by enhancing positive emotions and experiences, one can help to reduce the negative emotions that individuals experience and, subsequently, their negative behaviors and attitudes (see, for example, Duckworth et al., 2005; Gredecki & Turner, 2009; Wylie & Griffin, 2012).

Furthermore, by concentrating on positive elements and fostering positive experiences, one can help to reduce negative elements and foster the desistance process. Hence, the first “why” also suggests that *following a positive criminology approach can help reduce recidivism*. For example, Duckworth et al. (2005), who discussed successful research in the field of positive psychology, noted that motivational researchers have shown that pursuing goals that are consistent with individuals’ core values and beliefs will lead to their growth, increase their well-being and ability to adjust, and improve their ability for future-mindedness and the attainment of future goals. This research demonstrated the same line of reasoning applied in the Good Lives Model (GLM), an intervention model aimed directly at reducing recidivism and promoting desistance by enhancing individual strengths and talents and promoting positive reintegration into society (Ward, Mann, & Gannon, 2007). One of the important elements applied in the GLM, which has also been found by desistance research to be a significant factor in reducing recidivism, is helping individuals discover and attain new goals that do not involve offending, and that these new goals are meaningful for the individual offender (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Maruna, 2000; McNeill, 2006; McNeill, Bachelor, Burnett, & Knox, 2005; Whitehead et al., 2007). This relatively new understanding that focusing on reducing the negative will not automatically prompt positive human development and crime desistance has guided recent endeavors in positive psychology and positive criminology. Namely, it has guided positive psychology and positive criminology toward enhancing positive experiences, and by that, reducing recidivism and other negative elements (Duckworth et al., 2005; Gredecki & Turner, 2009; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Ward & Stewart, 2010).

Another interesting aspect of positive criminology is that it *has the capacity to look at the individual’s whole* (challenges, strengths, talents, well-being, protective factors, etc.)—the second “why”—rather than looking mainly at risk factors and individuals’

criminal behavior. Consequently, its practice can increase the possible benefits of intervention with offenders (see for example, Gredecki & Turner, 2009; Helliwell, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ward et al., 2007). In other words, positive criminology not only focuses solely on the “problematic” attributes that the individual presents but also attempts to provide individuals with positive experiences that may shift their understanding of themselves and others. As a result, positive criminology can help offenders to get a better grip, or gain ownership, of the problems they face, as well as the solution they are now better equipped to achieve. Thus, the third “why” is that *positive criminology attempts to provide individuals with ownership of the problem as well as the solution* (Peyrot, 1982). This goal is achieved by providing appropriate positive experiences that will shift their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others, which can in turn increase their ability to face their own problems and formulate a solution.

In a sense, positive emotions experienced by individuals can lead to an “upward spiral”—a “positive spin”—that veers them out of a criminal spin (Bensimon, Baruch, & Ronel, 2013; Ronel, 2013) by broadening their cognitive and behavioral repertoires. This, in turn, can improve their coping and problem-solving skills (Gredecki & Turner, 2009). A mutual reinforcement of positively experienced means and behavioral responses of individuals can promote a sense of self-integration that might replace the inner chaos and lack of a “conceptual center, a center of consciousness for their world” (Timor, 2001, p. 745) that according to Timor many offending individuals experience.

Furthermore, a core element of these positive experiences is that *they are socially inclusive*—the fourth “why”—by, for example, engaging the community in intervention programs (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004) or providing a “strengths-based” offender-reintegration program (Burnett & Maruna, 2006). As such, they can help offenders resettle and sustain desistance (Maruna, 2012; McNeill, 2006). Because the very act of offending involves a sense of social separation (Ronel, 2013), conversely, that of social unification can overcome the criminal one. In this sense, positive criminology raises a call for society to establish integrative attitudes, approaches, and mechanisms for recovering offenders to promote their social integration. That is, positive criminology argues for social inclusion and integration, but for that to occur, offenders need to have opportunities available upon their return to society. Such integration is perceived as the responsibility of society, which might positively and intelligently use its power, institutions, and means toward this end (Braithwaite, 2006). The socially inclusive nature of positive criminology can diminish the criminal spin and the growing self-centeredness of individuals and foster a spin in the opposite direction. In turn, this positive spin can increase the individual’s ability to step away from self-centeredness and experience less chaos and greater self-integration.

Thus, the fifth “why” suggests that *positive criminology offers a spiritual horizon* that can increase offending individuals’ ability to step away from self-centeredness and inspire them to find a meaning greater than that of their everyday struggle in a materialistic world of criminality and social responses. It could be argued that the response of the criminal justice system can intensify a growing self-centeredness by inducing another experience of social exclusion (Clark, 2006) and pushing offenders toward an extreme state of survival, where their perceived threats become

increasingly crucial. In contrast, the spiritual vision of positive criminology challenges the growing self-centeredness described (Ronel, 2000), and provides individuals with an opportunity to experience some spiritual unification. It is a spirituality of the acceptance of human imperfection and of instilling hope (Kurtz & Ketcham, 1992).

Based on the human and spiritual horizon of positive criminology, everyone who is involved in practice (whether offending individuals or those who provide an intervention), as well as the means being practiced and the message being researched and taught, are all consistent and share common core values of human acceptance and respect, integration, and doing good. Unfortunately, the practice of the criminal justice system suffers from a lack of consistency with which thinkers have struggled through centuries. For instance, punishment is applied in the form of a violent act that aims at ending violence and deterring further violence (see for example, Reinikainen, 2005). Positive criminology offers a sound alternative that exemplifies what it teaches, and thus, the sixth “why” is that *the application of positive criminology exemplifies its basic propositions, thereby providing a role model for possible transformation.*

What Can Be Done: Introducing Practice Principles for Positive Criminology

This section presents principles for the practice of positive criminology, offering components that may enhance desistance by providing individuals or groups with a positive constructive experience. As noted earlier, some of these components rely on previous studies, interventions, and models, and some of them require further research. These practice principles are neither fixed nor exhaustive and are open to future change, as new or other relevant information and research might arise. They are divided into two themes: (a) manner of treatment by criminal justice personnel and (b) examples of various interventions that reflect positive criminology. Each of the two themes is divided into subthemes, as illustrated. First, we present the practice principles, and in the following section, we elaborate on the different components proposed. In describing these interventions, we do not categorize practices according to their evidence-based assessment. This very term has recently been questioned, and it may not correspond well to the spirit of positive criminology, which emphasizes human interactions rather than programs and components (Maruna & LeBel, 2010; Orford, 2008; Ronel, Elisha, Timor, & Chen, 2012).

Practice Principles for Positive Criminology

1. Manner of treatment by criminal justice personnel
 - a. The behavior of criminal justice personnel toward the individual offender
 - i. Provide human closeness (support/acceptance) when interacting with the individual.

- ii. Offer a positive personal example of the ability to step away from self-centeredness.
 - iii. Offer prosocial modeling.
 - iv. Demonstrate optimism and hope toward the individual's prospects.
- b. Proposed aims for the caring professional
- i. Identify and foster the individual's strengths and talents.
 - ii. Identify and guide routes of social integration.
 - iii. Provide experiences of stepping out of self-centeredness (e.g., volunteering).
 - iv. Identify routes for enhancing motivation for change.
 - v. Promote challenge and success (a sense of self-efficacy).
 - vi. Foster a sense of hope and optimism.
2. Examples of different interventions that reflect positive criminology
- a. Social inclusion and social support
- i. Therapeutic jurisprudence courts.
 - ii. Teen courts.
 - iii. The GLM.
 - iv. Exposure to various volunteer programs directed at offenders as clients.
 - v. "Anonymous"¹ and other self-help groups.
 - vi. Volunteer activity by offenders for the benefit of others.
- b. Self-efficacy through interventions
- i. Interventions that provide a challenge for offenders.
 - ii. Various sport programs, such as cycling or running programs.
 - iii. Educational programs.
- c. Repairing the harm through intervention
- i. Restorative justice.
- d. Self- and spiritual integration through intervention
- i. The 12-step program and other spirituality-based interventions.
 - ii. Teaching mindfulness, such as a Vipassana² course.

A Positive Experience: How Is It Applied and How Might It Promote Desistance

The practice principles presented above rely on research and theories from various fields, all of which reflect the concept and spirit of positive criminology. In particular, the components rely on literature in the fields of desistance studies, positive criminology, positive psychology, prosocial modeling, sociology of acceptance, and more. Hence, by uniting these components and practice techniques within a broader

framework of “practice principles,” we hope to emphasize the overlap with positive criminology. This, in turn, may encourage collaboratively developed practice techniques that can be utilized within the broader framework of positive criminology. Furthermore, by gathering the suggested practice principles under the unifying umbrella of positive criminology, we hope to promote an integration of the models and theories in a practice that embodies the spirit and values of the concept. Different programs and different approaches based on a common positive criminology perspective might be appropriate for different offenders depending on their needs and challenges. Next, we elaborate on each section presented and provide examples to further clarify the concept and the spirit of positive criminology.

The Approach to Offenders and Core Aims for Growth

Sections *a* and *b* in the first theme of practice principles presented in the outline earlier refer to the behavior of criminal justice personnel toward the individual offender, as well as proposed aims for the caretaker when dealing with offenders. In particular, both sections emphasize what kind of behaviors of criminal justice personnel should be encouraged and what sort of elements caretakers should foster to enhance positive experiences for the individual offender and thereby reduce self-centeredness, promote positive change, reduce negative attitudes and behaviors, and enhance desistance. Section *a* stresses a known but sometimes overlooked fact, that is, the importance of the quality of the relationship between those who provide an intervention at any level and the individuals who are the subjects of this intervention (Durlak, 1979; Horwitz, 1990; Orford, 2008; Strupp & Hadley, 1979). The proposed elements in Section *a* suggest that positive change and desistance might be enhanced by criminal justice personnel when, throughout their work, they attempt to provide human closeness to offenders in a manner consistent with the sociology of acceptance or as soundly described in the motivational interviewing model (Miller & Rollnick, 2002). As Braithwaite (2000) clearly stated, “The offender is treated as a good person who has done a bad deed” (p. 282). They should also provide offenders with a positive personal example by, for example, acting in a manner that represents an ability to step away from self-centeredness.

In addition, Section *a* proposes that criminal justice personnel use behaviors that correlate with prosocial behavior modeling, such as reliability (keeping appointments, being punctual, and following up on tasks); honesty; respecting other people’s feelings; reflective listening practices; working in a solution-focused way; optimistic language; warmth; empathy; openness; enthusiasm; expressing views about the value of positive family relationships, working, and having noncriminal friends; and interpreting people’s (the client’s and others) motives as positive (Bonta, Ruge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2009; Cherry, 2005; Trotter, 2009). Mirroring prosocial modeling could help to develop a positive, beneficial, and trusting relationship between the client and the worker; increase the client’s motivation toward change; increase the client’s engagement in the therapy process; provide a concrete direction for change; and help to reduce recidivism (Bonta et al., 2009; Trotter, 2009). In particular, acting

with optimism and hope toward individuals' prospects may increase the individuals' belief in themselves and resilience in the face of challenge, and thus increase their ability to change (Cherry, 2005).

For example, research conducted by Elisha et al. (2011) found that imprisoned sex offenders responded positively to relationships that were characterized by acceptance and support by other individuals in their lives. These relationships encouraged them to change and participate in formal treatment. Ronel et al. (2012) also illustrated the importance of an accepting and caring relationship between staff and clients of a therapeutic community in generating a recovery process. Furthermore, research conducted on positive criminology has examined the impact of a personal encounter with perceived goodness, as represented by volunteers, with street youth at risk (Ronel, 2006). The volunteers provided the young people with a positive personal example and encouraged various positive processes. In particular, encountering volunteers was perceived as a positive experience that the youths drew upon to change their view of the world, their view of a specific organization, and finally, their view of how they could give back and make a difference. Furthermore, engaging offenders with the community by way of volunteering might help build trust and social capital and promote smoother reintegration in the community (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

Indeed, individuals can draw from positive experiences and, in turn, develop positive attributes that will help and foster the desistance process. Thus, the principles also present core aims for the caring professionals that emphasize what kind of elements should be fostered within the individual to prompt a positive process. Specifically, the practice principles suggest the promotion of individual strengths and talents, suggesting integrative routes for individuals, providing them with experiences of stepping away from their self-centeredness, and promoting a sense of self-efficacy, hope, and optimism. Human strengths can become visible in the face of challenges; they can lead to an "upward spiral" and a positive spin in which well-being is enhanced and positive behavior and attitudes can increase (Duckworth et al., 2005; Gredecki & Turner, 2009; Smith, Tooley, Christopher, & Kay, 2010). According to positive psychology literature, human strengths include (but are not limited to) optimism, hope, faith, courage, developing interpersonal skills, work ethic, enhancing future-mindedness, honesty, and perseverance in the face of challenges (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Furthermore, developing offenders' strengths can help build and sustain the momentum for change in the face of different challenging life experiences, such as difficulties in finding a job due to a criminal record (McNeill, 2006). Similarly, helping individuals identify and follow their talents can encourage them to pursue goals that do not involve offending, but better reflect their identity and illuminate more elements of individual strengths and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, a change process partly depends on individuals believing that they have a self in need of a change (Braithwaite, Ahmed, & Braithwaite, 2006). Consequently, guiding an individual toward social integration in various forms as well as promoting awareness and care for others can enhance ability to step away from self-centeredness by reducing the sense of alienation offenders often experience and by fostering a practice of empathy toward others (Uzan, 2009).

Next, promoting challenge and success (a sense of self-efficacy) when dealing with offenders, as well as promoting a sense of hope and optimism, can play a role in developing and fostering an individual's character strengths. Specifically, promoting challenge and success by various innovations in the criminal justice system such as participation in cycling or Vipassana programs can provide a challenge for individuals that they can meet. Successful negotiation of a challenge can help foster a positive belief in their abilities to face various challenges in life (see for example, Ronel et al., 2013). A sense of self-efficacy coupled with a sense of hope and optimism regarding future prospects are fundamental components in the ability of an individual to desist from crime (Burnett, 2000; Burnett & Maruna, 2004; LeBel et al., 2008; Martin & Stermac, 2010). Research has shown a link between optimism and effective problem solving, freedom from trauma (Peterson, 2000), and even the enhancement of an individual's future goal orientation (Akhtar & Boniwell, 2010). Furthermore, an optimistic outlook and hope have been linked to self-regulation and a continued effort to attain set goals. Conversely, a pessimistic outlook and skepticism about positive future prospects have been linked to giving up and are seen as elements that can hinder the desistance process (Burnett, 2000; Burnett & Maruna, 2004; LeBel et al., 2008; Peterson, 2000). The question of how developing human strength and increasing self-efficacy, optimism, and hope can enhance desistance and reduce negative behavior is associated with positive psychology theory, which postulates, for example, that an individual who solves a problem with an optimistic outlook is likely to experience positive emotions, which will, in turn, lead to a greater ability to cope with future difficulties (Gredecki & Turner, 2009). Thus, in a sense, positive emotions can lead to positive individual development by broadening cognitive and behavioral repertoires, which in turn aid coping, and prompt further positive emotions (Gredecki & Turner, 2009). This process illustrates the cycle of a positive spin that feeds itself and counters the criminal spin experienced by offenders.

The Reflection of Positive Criminology in Various Interventions

The second theme in the model provides examples of various interventions that reflect a positive criminology approach and thus exemplify the issues discussed earlier. Section *a* of the second theme proposes the application of interventions that reflect the experience of social inclusion and support. Therapeutic jurisprudence and teen courts offer an alternative to the normative court process. The first is based on the philosophy that lawyers and judges must be sensitive to the therapeutic or anti-therapeutic consequences that their actions and decisions can foster (Casey & Rotman, 2000; Wexler, 2012), and the latter uses a unique reintegrative shaming approach (Stickle, Connell, Wilson, & Gottfredson, 2008). In the case of therapeutic jurisprudence, one of the important elements related to positive criminology is that the court fosters direct communication between the judge and the participant. The judge typically plays an important role in the progress of individuals by monitoring them closely, reinforcing successes through encouragement and praise, and using sanctions in case of relapse or

failure to attend treatment (Wilson, Mitchell, & Mackenzie, 2006). Hence, such interventions reflect various elements in positive criminology, such as human closeness, some aspects of prosocial modeling, social inclusion, and enhancing desistance by providing a constructive experience of the court process (Segev, 2010).

Furthermore, these two interventions reflect social inclusion and support, as well as the promotion of positive individual development by fostering various elements presented in the first theme of the practice principles. Additional examples of such interventions are the GLM, being exposed to various volunteering programs, "Anonymous" and other self-help groups, and finally, volunteering. The GLM, for example, aims at identifying individual goals, enhancing positive aspects within the individual, and promoting smooth resettlement in the community (Ward et al., 2007). Furthermore, it places great emphasis on offenders' personal preferences and values, drawing upon these to motivate them to live a life without criminal offenses, as well as providing them with the skills and opportunities to succeed in achieving their goals (Whitehead et al., 2007). Hence, the GLM is an intervention intended to foster many of the components presented in the first theme of the model, and thereby to reduce recidivism.

Part *b* of the second theme places emphasis on promoting self-efficacy through interventions. The proposed interventions include, for example, a running program that is often applied with youth offenders in Israel; wilderness adventure programs applied, for example, in the United States; or a program for completing education. These interventions are only a few of the numerous programs that may increase self-efficacy. However, they incorporate a significant element (which should also direct future innovations), namely, providing individuals with a challenge that they can then overcome. Successful completion of such a program has the potential to stimulate positive emotions and increase self-efficacy and individual strengths and, in turn, reduce negative emotions such as powerlessness and skepticism about one's ability to set and achieve goals (Openheim & Timor, 2005).

The next two subsections in the practice principles propose interventions that can reduce the harm done by the crime and promote self and spiritual integration. We would like to note that many of the interventions suggested could be associated with more than one of the subsections suggested in the model. For example, restorative justice, which is listed under *Repairing the harm through intervention*, would also be suitable under the category of *Social inclusion and social support*, because the former reflects an intervention that emphasizes the social inclusion of offenders (Gray, 2005). However, restorative justice is also intended to increase the awareness and understanding of the harm done by the crime (Braithwaite, 2006), thus reducing self-centeredness. By experiencing responsibility for the act and the harm incurred, the offender can start taking action toward repairing the harm and, in turn, experiencing social integration (Hayes & Daly, 2003).

Interventions such as the 12-step program and a Vipassana course in prison are especially suitable for developing the ability to step away from self-centeredness and reducing social, existential, and spiritual alienation. For example, the 12-step program aims to foster spiritual intelligence and reduce self-centeredness by emphasizing God-centeredness and the good of others (Ronel, 2000, 2008). The term God-centeredness

might refer to pragmatic understanding of the concept, such as, for example, a growing moral consciousness (Maxwell, 1984). The program proposes a moral code—a moral way of life—whereby challenges presented by one's character, such as self-centeredness, are transformed into virtues, such as being tuned-in and helping others (Ronel, 2000).

Some of the interventions mentioned work better with specific types of crimes or offenders, such as juvenile delinquency, drug-related crimes, or domestic violence. However, what these interventions as well as the proposed behavior and aims for criminal justice personnel all share is that they reflect an attitude or a concept presented by positive criminology. Positive criminology advocates the adoption of a perspective in the handling of offenders throughout the criminal justice process. Yet, it should be stated that offenders who face prison time experience many challenges upon their reentry, such as difficulties with educational and vocational attainment and stigmatization. Therefore, it is also important that offenders will receive proper social support and opportunities in their local community to desist from crime upon reentry (Weaver & McNeill, 2007). Next, we present a study conducted by Helliwell (2011) that captures the essence of positive criminology and demonstrates how, by adopting that concept, it is possible to reduce recidivism and promote well-being.

At the end of the 1990s, the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) experienced similar challenges to those found in other prison systems around the world (Helliwell, 2011), including overcrowded prisons and a staff shortage. At the same time, the SPS favored a rehabilitative approach toward offenders (Ng, 2009). However, rehabilitation efforts had always been handled by specialists and were limited to encouraging work, education, and religious counseling (Helliwell, 2011). Furthermore, prison officers in Singapore wanted to do more to help prisoners change and become contributing members of society (Ng, 2009). The continuing discussions on such issues and the attempt to resolve the challenges they faced gave rise to a newly shared vision and extensive reform of the SPS, which had a dramatic effect on the relationship among the prisoners, prison officers, and the community (Helliwell, 2011).

The SPS has since introduced various innovations, which reflect a change in attitude and an attempt to improve the well-being of prisoners, increase trust, and foster a positive relationship among prisoners, prison officers, and the community. The SPS leaders and staff realized that they should address reintegration from the very first day of incarceration, rather than waiting, as they had, to the last period of the prisoner's sentence. Consequently, as part of a large number of interventions, the SPS enhanced cooperation between care in prison and care after prison. The SPS also opened its prison doors to the public and the press, emphasizing the success stories of reformed ex-prisoners. As an example, they ran a program whereby they cohosted a lunch for the elderly, with inmates cooking the meals. In addition, inmates, ex-offenders, and after-care agencies participate in annual song-writing contests, which aim at raising awareness and funds. As a result, media coverage began to change public attitudes toward prisons. These and many other measures and interventions have engendered changes in the public's attitude and led to an increase in the recruitment of prison officers and volunteers. Also, the SPS experienced procedural reforms that allowed the

increased use of home detentions, tele-visits, and virtual court session, thus reducing resources spent and maintaining the system at a very low cost, as well as increasing mutual trust between prisoners and prison staff (Helliwell, 2011). Indeed, the reforms in the SPS have had outstanding favorable implications for all involved. Inmates' respect for prison officers rose from 58% in 2002 to 92% in 2006; there has also been a one-third drop in recidivism and a reduction in prison violence. A 2007 survey noted that 70% of the community was willing to accept ex-offenders as colleagues or friends (Singapore Prison System, 2006, Figures 7.1.1, 7.2.1, and 7.2.3, as cited in Helliwell, 2011, pp. 255, 261-262).

Positive Criminology: A Holistic Approach to Desistance

Helliwell's research provided a notable example of how a change in attitude toward enhancing well-being and introducing positive elements and experiences for prisoners has brought about various positive processes for individual offenders and a desirable change for the entire criminal justice system. It would be interesting to explore whether we could take the Singapore case study and apply its concept to our own criminal justice system, and how its core ideas would best be applied in different countries. This study is a good illustration of the positive criminology perspective. In particular, the research demonstrates that direct intervention programs in the criminal justice system are not separate or distinct from other segments within this system and the community; there is some association between treatment providers and other criminal justice personnel (e.g., prison officers, youth workers, and judges) and "the spirit" of the community. Thus, we argue that the criminal justice system, as a whole, should adopt the spirit and values of positive criminology, as presented in the practice principles proposed. We suggest that the first step toward achieving that aim would be to offer training for criminal justice personnel on the concept of positive criminology and its practical application.

The current paradigm of the criminal justice system aims to promote desistance primarily through the application of treatment programs and the reduction of risk factors. However, such specific attitudes toward reducing recidivism pay less heed to significant benefits that can result from attempting to enhance an offender's well-being with the involvement of as many resources as possible (i.e., courts, prisons, after-prison care, prison officers, judges, youth workers, volunteers, parole officers, treatment providers, family members, and more). Hence, we advocate the adoption of the concept of positive criminology throughout the entire criminal justice system. The criminal process is interconnected and such integrative work has the greatest potential to affect the offender.

Conclusion

Positive criminology provides an outlook from which research in criminology can be (and already is) conducted, and from which the criminal justice system can (and does) operate. However, to date, there have been no guiding practice principles for positive

criminology that could direct research and the criminal justice system. In this article, we have attempted to fill that gap by presenting such practice principles.

We proposed progressive components that may create positive experiences for target individuals, promote individual changes, and enhance desistance. We argue that applying positive criminology and fostering positive emotions and experiences can help reduce negative emotions, behaviors, and attitudes, as well as help reduce recidivism. Furthermore, positive criminology incorporates a socially inclusive attitude, which can increase the ability to step away from self-centeredness and further prompt positive emotions and resettlement in the community. In addition, we suggest that positive criminology offers a spiritual horizon that can veer individual offenders away from a criminal spin by reducing self-centeredness and promoting self-integration. Furthermore, positive criminology looks at the individual as a whole and attempts to provide offenders with ownership of the problems they face, as well as the related solutions. That is, positive criminology does not focus solely on the “problematic” attributes that the individual presents. Rather, it attempts to provide individuals with positive experiences that may shift their understanding of themselves and others, which can then increase their ability to face their own problems and formulate a solution.

To conclude, we argue that treatment programs are not separate or distinct in their effect on behavior patterns in other segments within the justice system or from other criminal justice personnel who are not treatment providers or from the community. Consequently, promoting desistance should not be addressed only through treatment, but should also be managed through the process of the criminal justice system and by all criminal justice personnel. Thus, the entire criminal justice system may benefit from adopting the spirit and values of positive criminology. Finally, positive criminology offers congruent principles (Rogers, 1957), where the aims, means, and theory follow the same underlying spirit. Positive criminology is therefore relevant at every level, from behavioral to moral. In the criminal justice system, which attempts to justify itself on moral grounds, such highly moral congruency is not a luxury, but a necessity.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. “Anonymous” refers to those self-help groups that follow the well-established model of Alcoholics Anonymous (Room, 1993).
2. Vipassana is an ancient meditation technique that originated in India and is associated with the teachings of Gautama, the Buddha. The word “Vipassana” means to see things as they really are and the practice holds three main elements: (a) morality, which is reflected

in Vipassana practice by abstinence from any act that can bring suffering to any sentient being and acting to promote the well-being of others; (b) mindfulness, which refers to the individual's attempt to gain mastery over his or her own mind; and (c) experiential wisdom that is based on self-observation without reaction to physical sensations (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2011, pp. 5-6).

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