DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP ME? PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES
ON A NEW COACHING MODEL FOR PROBATION FRONT-LINE
SUPERVISORS

by

Heather Toronjo
A Thesis
Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty
of
George Mason University
in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
of
Master of Arts
Criminology, Law, and Society

Committee:

______________________________ Chair

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________ Program Director

______________________________ Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Date: ____________________________ Spring Semester 2020
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
Do You Really Want to Help Me? Practitioner Perspectives on a New Coaching Model for Probation Front-Line Supervisors

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at George Mason University

by

Heather Toronjo
Master of Public Policy
George Mason University, 2013
Bachelor of Arts
Texas A&M University, 2003

Director: James Willis, Professor
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Spring Semester 2020
George Mason University
Fairfax, VA
Dedication

This is dedicated to Taylor and Desi.
Acknowledgements

There are many people without whom this thesis would not have been possible. I would like to thank just a few of them here.

First, thank you to my thesis committee, Drs. James Willis, Danielle Rudes, and David B. Wilson, for always being there to offer guidance, encouragement, and when needed, timelines. Each of you has inspired me in different ways and I feel lucky to have known you all. Dr. Rudes, your compassion for others and uncanny ability to compartmentalize continue to teach me invaluable lessons. Your mentorship of young scholars is unmatched. Dr. Wilson, you are a paragon of research integrity and your dedication to the craft of quality science remains my true north when doubts start to get the better of me. When my "thoughtful doubting" turns into skeptic pessimism, knowing you are in the ring never fails to restore my faith in science.

I would especially like to thank Dr. James Willis. Thank you for your patience, your guidance, and your feedback on my endless drafts. Your work ethic and intellectual curiosity drive me to work harder and think deeper. You have the remarkable ability to simultaneously motivate and challenge. I am honored to have the opportunity to work with you. I cannot adequately express how appreciative I am of your time and your always thoughtful comments. I feel lucky to be in your orbit.

I would also like to thank Dr. Faye Taxman, without whom I would not have started this journey. Thank you for opening the door and taking a chance on me. Thank you for believing in my coaching vision and providing the opportunity to put it into action. I am forever indebted.

Thank you to my practitioner partners and especially the supervisors that participated in this study. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and providing a glimpse into your world. You continue to teach me what it means to be a leader.

To my friends, thank you for being my cheerleaders. Especially Josephine Onah, with whom I could always commiserate, and Catherine Kimbrell, whom I could never disappoint.

And finally, thank you to my husband and my son. You two are my reason for everything. To my husband, I suppose on this one thing you were right. Do or do not, there is no try.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Framing the Need for Coaching</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Topic and Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: A Critical Review of the Literature and The Case for Coaching</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Risk-Need-Responsivity Principles</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Core Correctional Practices</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Core Correctional Practices and Coaching</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 STICS</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 STARR</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3 EPICS</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.4 SOARING2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Implementation science: feasibility and the missing practitioner voice</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Organization and design of SUSTAIN</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 Social work and psychology models for SUSTAIN coaching</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 Updates to SOARING2</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3 SUSTAIN coaches training</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Methods</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Sample</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Galbraith County</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Hooks County</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Tiptree County</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4 Eliot County</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1 Summary of Research Results on RNR Training Models</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Differences Between SOARING2 and SUSTAIN</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3: Sample Demographics</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4: Summary of County Differences</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5: Timeline of Events by Site</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6: Current Top Supervisor Responsibilities</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7: In Vivo Coding of Officer Attributes</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Galbraith County Organizational Chart</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Hooks County Organizational Chart</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Tiptree County Organizational Chart</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: Eliot County Organizational Chart</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: Comfort with Coaching Practices</td>
<td>..........................................................</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7: Supervisor-Identified Needs for Coaching</td>
<td>....................................................</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8: Feasibilities Issues Identified by Coaches</td>
<td>..................................................</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk Need Responsivity</td>
<td>................................................................................................. RNR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Undertaking Skills to Advance Innovation</td>
<td>................................................................................................. SUSTAIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Practices in Community Supervision</td>
<td>................................................................................................. EPICS/EPICS-II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Rearrests</td>
<td>................................................................................................. STARR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision</td>
<td>................................................................................................. STICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence-Based Practices</td>
<td>................................................................................................. EBPs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

DO YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP ME? PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES ON A NEW COACHING MODEL FOR PROBATION FRONT-LINE SUPERVISORS

Heather Toronjo, M.A.

George Mason University, 2020

Thesis Director: Dr. James Willis

The RNR model dominates evidence-informed approaches to community supervision, and it is incorporated into several trainings (e.g., STICS, STARR, EPICS, SOARING2) aimed at improving the practice of front-line probation officers. Important to these technology transfer models is the coaching component. However, studies on the existing models reveal glaring feasibility issues. Missing from much of the efforts to move science from “bench to trench,” is a conscious effort on the part of scholars to learn from the practitioners themselves. Despite the importance of provider perspectives highlighted by implementation science, scant literature exists on the perspectives of those tasked with using the RNR model in practice. This study aims to understand the important implementation domains of acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility as conceptualized by Proctor et al. (2011) of the coaching component of a newly devised RNR training model called SUSTAIN. To understand the perspective of participants, this study interviewed (n=22) coaches-in-
training at four agencies implementing SUSTAIN. The half-hour to one hour-long semi-structured interviews occurred within one to two weeks of participants completing a two-day in-person coaches’ training which occurs around four months into the two-year projects. In considering the complexity of real-world service settings the findings will guide future SUSTAIN implementation efforts. Furthermore, and the process of obtaining and integrating feedback may serve as a guide for future implementation efforts of other evidence-informed practices trainings in community corrections settings.
Chapter 1: Framing the Need for Coaching

11 years going to court knowing they might keep you or drive you crazy
23 hours in a cell, somebody save me

-Meek Mill, Trauma

April 27, 2019, Robert Rihmeek Williams, known professionally as Meek Mill, stepped triumphantly out of a Philadelphia courtroom to a crowd of supporters chanting “free Meek!” A judge overturned Mill’s original conviction marking the end of an 11-year probation sentence spanning Mill’s entire adult life to that point. The case was overturned after Mill served a two-year jail sentence for a probation violation (his sixth) in his eighth year of supervision. His many violations stemmed from suspected marijuana use, not having travel plans approved, tweeting negatively about his probation officer, being disrespectful, a fight in an airport, and popping wheelies on a dirt bike in New York City. Mill's probation sentence coincided with his release of a platinum-selling debut album and his rising celebrity garnered his case unprecedented attention. While the attention was unprecedented, what Mill's case came to symbolize - a dragnet of mass supervision rendering individuals powerless in the face of seemingly inane rules - is all too common to far too many.

Probation is the most commonly used criminal sentence in the United States. Due in large part to decades of “get tough” policies adopted in federal, state, and local
jurisdictions (e.g., three-strikes, mandatory minimums, and truth in sentencing laws), the probation population swelled from under 1 million in 1980 to a high water mark of over 5 million in 2009 before lowering back down to just over 4.5 million in the last Bureau of Justice Statistics survey in 2016 (Keable, 2018; Labrecque, 2017). Managing this phenomenon of mass supervision are over 2,000 independent probation agencies nationwide encompassing six separate probation systems: juvenile, municipal, county, state, state combined probation and parole, and federal (Labrecque, 2017). At least two of these systems (and likely more) operate simultaneously in each state.

Despite variation in systems and governance structures, the mission of all probation agencies is to ensure compliance with supervision conditions. When a person does not comply with their conditions, the probation officer may petition the court to have the person’s probation sentence revoked, in which case the individual is likely incarcerated. Each day about one in four incarcerated individuals (280,000 people) are in for a supervision violation. Forty-five percent of all new prison admissions stem from a probation or parole violation, half of which are due to a technical violation of their conditions of supervision (Council of State Governments, 2019).

Probation rules provide myriad opportunities for technical violations such as missing appointments, positive drug screens, leaving the county without permission, staying out past curfew, not attending treatment as ordered, living with the wrong people, or hanging out with the wrong people, among others. Probation can be a minefield of trouble for those caught in its net. Despite this discretionary power and responsibility, the job of probation officer requires little-to-no specialized training and in-service trainings
generally lack the one-on-one development needed to improve the decision-making and professional practice of a “particular worker carrying a particular caseload, encountering particular problems....” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014, pg. 91).

The probation system with its state sanctioned power to interfere in the lives of those under supervision, has a responsibility to ensure its workforce develops the necessary wisdom needed to live up to its purported ideals. While leaders in the field call for wholesale changes to the mission and values of community supervision (Executive Session on Community Corrections., 2017), perhaps nothing embodies current on-the-ground change efforts more than the implementation of evidence-based practices (EBPs). Evidence-based practices, as the name signifies, rely on scientific evidence focused on outcomes to inform decision-making. This method is thought to be superior to relying on the alternatives such as tradition, intuition, or gut feelings. Among EBPs within the field of probation, arguably none has greater influence than Andrew & Bonta’s (1990) Risk-Need-Responsivity model. First introduced in 1990, the model now dominates correctional science. The RNR model attempts to infuse human service practices within a justice context.

In the years since the introduction of the RNR model, probation scholars have created an array of RNR-based training curricula most notably STICS, STARR, EPICS, and SOARING2 (Bonta et al., 2016; Labrecque & Smith, 2017; Robinson et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2012). Each curriculum focuses on the risk, need, and responsivity principles to guide officer decision-making and presents an assortment of skills (collectively referred to as core correctional practices) for officers to use with individuals under
supervision. The trainings exemplify technology transfer models that transfer evidence from “bench to trench.” This transfer process includes the development of coaches, either peer (EPICS, STAAR), professional (STICS), or front-line supervisors (SOARING2), who can observe officers in their use of skills and provide feedback to improve the officer’s competency in using specific skills. Despite promising findings on officer use of skills and probationer recidivism outcomes, the published studies on STICS, STARR & EPICS, and the unpublished study on SOARING2, reveal concerning feasibility issues with implementing and sustaining the models. For example, despite having voluntary participants, the STICS, STARR and EPICS studies all had significant trouble retaining participation levels over the course of the study (Bourgon & Armstrong, 2005; Labrecque & Smith, 2017; Robinson et al., 2012). ACE piloted SOARING2 in six sites and only one agency continued with the coaching through the pilot.

The training model which is the focus of this study is an updated version of SOARING2 called Staff Undertaking Skills to Advance Innovation (SUSTAIN). The SUSTAIN training model focuses on developing front-line supervisors and reconceptualizes the concept of coaching by borrowing a framework for front-line supervision from the field of social work in which the supervisor has administrative, educative, and supportive functions (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). It also uses an empirical model from the field of psychology to construct coaching competencies and design the coaches' training (Milne & Reiser, 2017).

As corrections wades deeper into human services, it is prudent that the field learn from its close cousin, social work. Probation and social work have strikingly similar
contexts. They are both risk-averse environments organized in bureaucratic hierarchies, whose front-line workers are in “constant contact with highly charged affective situations” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014, pg. 25) in which the “principle instrumentality for helping the client is the worker himself.” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014, pg. 97). Because the personality of these front-line workers is one of the tools for the work, and no one can be objective about the “way they use themselves in relation to another person” (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014, pg. 26), Parsloe & Stevenson (1978) note that “A third person is essential to help the social worker stand back from the relationship and then return to it in way which are helpful to the client.” (pg. 205). Therefore, they argue, “supervision is essential for every social worker.” (pg. 205). They are essentially describing the need to create what Donald Schönen referred to as "reflective practitioners." (Schönen, 1983).

Social work’s history is rife with unintended consequences stemming from either misplaced moral imperatives or myopic problem solving (Hartman, 2019). As a field social work has attempted to be more self-reflective about its dubious past and improve social worker competencies through the use of supervision that encourages reflective practitioners (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). One of the most well-known models for improving social work practice comes from Kadushin and Harkness's *Supervision in Social Work* which defines a supervisor as a person “to whom authority is delegated to direct, coordinate, enhance, and evaluate the on-the-job performance of the supervisees for whose work he or she is held accountable” (pg. 11). The authors argue that front-line supervisors in social work agencies have three essential functions – administrative,
educative, and supportive. SUSTAIN relied on this framework in efforts to train front-line supervisors in probation agencies to be coaches in the same way that the field of social work has recognized the need for coaching of front-line social workers.

While the SUSTAIN coaching model is rooted in the extant literature on training, researchers at the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence designed it with minimal input from practitioners. Often, when an intervention fails (e.g., results do not come to fruition, or staff do not continue with practices) those involved blame implementation failure. However, this paper argues that traditional conceptions of technology transfer models fail to account for real world conditions, and do not do enough to incorporate local knowledge into implementation efforts.

Technology transfer models require that both the technology and the transfer process meet a certain standard of excellence. The technology acquires a standard of excellence by accumulating a trove of empirical data showing its effectiveness. In the case of corrections, the technology is often "evidence-informed" rather than evidence-based. As the technology mostly relies on practices effective at changing behavior outside of a justice context. The transfer process acquires a standard of excellence when it adheres to parameters outlined by the implementation science literature. These parameters cover everything from outer setting issues such as partnerships or funding streams to inner setting issues such as leadership support and perceptions of individuals within the organization (Taxman & Belenko, 2012). However, implementation science is at times criticized for imposing false order on that which is not orderly or linear. For casting normal working conditions as “contextual confounders” and framing them as
“sources of obduracy and interference with the smooth delivery of the trial.” (May et al., 2016; pg. 1). As human service practices strengthen their foothold within the field of probation, there must be a concomitant effort to understand the perceptions of those tasked with using these practices. As Braithwaite et al. (2018) note, “it makes less and less sense to think of ‘knowledge producers’ as conceptually distinct from ‘knowledge users’ when indeed they are inter-related.”

Understanding local perspectives in relation to developing a training for front-line supervisors in probation is important as we know little about the role of front-line supervisors in probation. A small cadre of researchers have looked at various aspects of being a front-line probation supervisors including how they use their power, and the ambiguity, role conflict and sensemaking front-line supervisors engage in during times of organizational change (Kras et al., 2019; Kras, Portillo, et al., 2017; Kras, Rudes, et al., 2017; Rudes, 2012). How front-line supervisors improve officer practice remains largely unknown.

Local knowledge comes together with implementation science in three concepts noted in the implementation science literature – the perceived acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of practices on the part of practitioners tasked with implementing change efforts (Proctor et al., 2011). While typically understand in context of an organization's implementation readiness, this paper argues that these concepts should also inform an innovation’s utility. In other words, practitioner perspectives about an innovation do not exist outside of evaluations on that innovation's effectiveness, but rather, are part of the evidence that informs the innovation's usefulness. Scholars should
treat practitioner perspectives as important feedback that may warrant a change to the technology itself.

1.1 Topic and Purpose of the Study

This paper assesses the acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of the coaching component of an RNR-based training model called Staff Undertaking Skills to Advance Innovation (SUSTAIN). SUSTAIN conceptualizes coaching as an accountable two-way process (i.e., dialogue and learning flows between a front-line supervisor and an officer, reciprocally) focused on integrating evidence-informed skills into practice and improving officer decision-making. This differs from the one-way coaching included in other RNR-based training models, wherein a coach provides feedback to an officer on their use of a set of skills.

The call for coaching in evidence-informed supervision practices is not new, many researchers note the necessity of maintaining adequate and on-going staff training and clinical supervision (Labrecque & Smith, 2017; Lowenkamp, 2012). This training focuses on developing the role of front-line supervisors in improving officer practice. This study develops and pilots an approach for collecting feedback on supervisor perceptions of the acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility of an evidence-informed coaching model in probation. Relying on Proctor et al.’s (2011) implementation framework, interview questions explored three areas thought to be vital for successful implementation efforts. Specifically, interview questions asked to what extent participants found SUSTAIN coaching 1) acceptable, 2) appropriate, and 3) feasible. The questions explore to what degree front-line supervisors are comfortable and satisfied with
the coaching practices. Questions also ask about the degree to which front-line supervisors find coaching practices compatible or suitable to their supervisory role. In other words, is coaching a stretch from what they view as their responsibilities as front-line supervisors? Does it align with current practices? Is it relevant to the needs of the agency? And finally, the interviews seek to understand feasibility issues from the perspective of the front-line supervisors. What do they see as the barriers to regularly coaching their officers?

The feedback from these interviews has implications for both the agency undertaking the change effort and the SUSTAIN program developers. For example, a lack of comfort might indicate the need for further training, or it may indicate a problem with the practices themselves. Perceptions about the appropriateness or suitability of the practices might highlight any gap between current management practices and the expectations that come with coaching. And perceptions of feasibility might provide valuable insights into ways that the training model can change, or ways in which the organization might need to change to ensure that front-line supervisors are able to coach their officers.
Chapter 2: A Critical Review of the Literature and The Case for Coaching Reflective Practitioners

There is nothing stable in the world: uproar's your only music.

- John Keats

While probation seeks to reinvent itself once again as a field tasked foremost with helping individuals change, probation agencies increasingly seek out evidence-informed practices to that end. At the forefront of this effort is the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model. This model seeks to identify the risk factors associated with criminal behavior and to instruct officers on how to address those risk factors (e.g., changing the way probationers think to reduce high-risk thoughts believed to be associated with criminal behavior). Collectively, these skills are categorized as human service skills. A key component of the model is the use of coaches to help officers achieve competency in their use of skills. Empirical studies on the RNR model's effectiveness in improving probation officer practices and client outcomes are promising. However, RNR scholars comprise a relatively small pool of researchers (most notably the RNR architects) often testing models they themselves have developed. A review of the evidence on the effectiveness of RNR-based training models provides three important take-aways. First, the studies illuminate the complexity of using human service skills in a justice complex, which has implications for the need for coaching. Second, implementation of these training models has heavily involved researchers, particularly in the coaching role, and
each attempt has evidenced real feasibility concerns. And third, the combination of the promising nature of the evidence (as opposed to being definitive), the implementation failures, and the complexity of the program components make it ideal for a participatory action framework. Such a framework works with bottom-up local stakeholders to adapt an intervention to their practices because, "In such a messy, complex set of circumstances, it makes less and less sense to think of 'knowledge producers' as conceptually distinct from 'knowledge users' when indeed they are inter-related." (Braithwaite et al., 2018; pg. 8).

2.1 Risk-Need-Responsivity Principles

The Risk-Need-Responsivity model attempts to encapsulate current knowledge on managing and ameliorating risk factors related to criminal behavior. Appendix A details the 15 principles of the RNR model. It is the core RNR principles of risk, need and responsivity most familiar to probation staff as these have become the basis for many widespread changes in the field, such as the use of risk/need assessment tools.

The risk principle states that agencies should spend the most time on individuals with higher risk scores. The risk score includes a scoring system based on certain aspects of a person’s criminal history, as well as an assortment of dynamic risk factors. Of the “big 4” criminogenic needs (those that are thought to have the strongest predictive power) three are dynamic.¹ They include personality factors such as low self-control, anti-social thoughts such as rationalizations or justifications for problem behavior, and antisocial peers. Other dynamic risk factors include employment and education history,

¹ This degree to which criminogenic needs are believed to predict behavior has been debated by scholars outside of the RNR world. See: https://www.nccdglobal.org/about-us/staff/chris-baird
substance use, family, and leisure time. The need principle directs probation officers to focus their efforts and interventions (e.g., employment counseling, cognitive behavioral therapy, or drug treatment) on dynamic risk factors (measured via an interview with the probationer). The responsivity principle suggests using a cognitive-behavioral approach generally, while taking other issues into account that may affect a person’s engagement in interventions.

Probation officers train on how to use a risk/need assessment, and then use that information to decide a person's level of supervision (e.g., low, moderate, or high). This information also informs the case plan goals and what interventions the person may need. In addition to following the risk and need principles, probation officers must also learn a new set of skills to use in their face-to-face contacts with probationers.

### 2.2 Core Correctional Practices

The RNR model also defines specific probation officer practices. These suggested practices, termed core correctional practices (CCP), stem from social learning theory and form the gist of what an officer is expected to do with an individual under supervision. Andrews and Keisling (1978) first developed these practices as part of a program to train volunteer probation officers in Canada. This Canadian Volunteer project, another project by Chris Trotter in Victoria, Australia, and several meta-analyses on core correctional practices provide the foundation of evidence for what an officer should do to change a probationer's behavior. An examination of the evidence reveals the promising nature of the practices as well as the complexity involved in getting it right.

Based on the premise that people learn behavior from others, but not from
everyone equally, Andrews and Keisling (1978) developed the “friendship model” to train volunteers helping in probation offices. Social learning theory posits that we pay more attention to certain people than others, and our behavior is often the result of predictions we make about the outcome of our behavior based on what we have seen happen to others, and to a lesser degree, consequences we have experienced ourselves.

The Canadian Volunteers in Corrections (CaVIC) project aimed to test the effectiveness of volunteer probation officers acting as a controlling, anticriminal, and a socially powerful or influential “friend.” This entailed establishing a warm relationship with probationers, establishing clear rules and sanctions, modeling and rewarding prosocial behavior, helping probationers to problem-solve, engaging in advocate-broker activities, such as sending the probationer to existing community resources. More so than a test of the training itself (as we see with later studies on training initiatives), this study aimed to better understand the skills and traits associated with probationer behavior change.

Andrews and Keissling tested the effectiveness of their training program and explored the practices associated with probationer behavior change by randomly assigning 96 probationers to a pool of 13 professional officers and 94 probationers assigned to a pool of 60 volunteers. The findings include three big takeaways worth noting. First, they boiled down the most basic elements of supervisory practices into appropriate use of authority, anticriminal modeling, and community-oriented problem-solving approaches. This meant that officer traits mattered when it came to supervision's effectiveness. Second, in the case of anticriminal modeling, the dosage likely mattered.
The effectiveness of these practices depended on "considerable exposure to the officer" (pg. 25). No subsequent studies on RNR training models have revisited this concept of dosage, or the time needed to ensure probation practices are effective, and those working in the field of community supervision research are loath to suggest a reduction in caseload sizes. However, it is notable that many of the studies on these training models start with a reduction in case load sizes for the participants (volunteers in the CaVIC study had one to two clients vs. professional officers who had 70-100). And finally, effectively using skills to change another person's behavior is a complex undertaking. For example, results indicated that the "friendship model" was best suited for moderate-to-high risk individuals who were "relatively verbal and communicative" (pg. 20). Problem-solving was related to reduced recidivism, but not when it had a recreational or personal-emotional focus. Additionally, skills accepted in the counseling world as important to forming a quality working relationship with an individual, such as reflecting back probationers' expressions or using active listening, could be detrimental if not paired with an appropriately high level of emphasis on authority practices. The implication is that simply learning a set of skills would not be enough. Officers must develop competence to use the skills in action, with all its associated complexity.

Scientists always stand on the shoulders of those who came before, and thus understanding the origins of the CaVIC program is important for understanding all subsequent probation officer training models. Shortly after the publication of the first edition of Psychology of Criminal Conduct, in which Andrews and Bonta unveiled the full RNR model, Trotter (1996) sought to build upon the findings from the CaVIC
program by training 30 community corrections officers in Victoria, Australia on the three skills found to be related to reduced recidivism in the friendship model study – prosocial modeling and reinforcement, problem-solving, and empathy. Unlike the CaVIC study, researchers did not code tapes but instead relied on officers’ file records, client questionnaires, and police records to determine each skill’s impact on the recidivism of probationers.

Trotter’s (1996) conception of prosocial modeling included 1) rewards, such as praise, reduction in frequency of appointments, or positive reports to courts, for prosocial or anticriminal activities or expressions, or 2) a prosocial presentation of self, such as being reliable, punctual, polite and friendly, honest and open, understanding, and expressing prosocial views such as valuing noncriminal friends, good family relations, and work. To illustrate an example of prosocial modeling Trotter included a field note that read, 'explained to the client that I could understand his anger, but I believe that there are better ways of dealing with it and talked about what some of these could be'. Trotter (1996) conceptualized problem solving as a series of steps and described empathy as the ability to see things from the probationer’s perspective. To assess officers’ use of skills, qualified social workers read, and rated officer file notes for adherence to each skill. Despite the use of slightly different skills and testing method based on file review rather than audiotape coding, Trotter (1996), too, found that the use of prosocial modeling, and to a lesser degree problem solving, were associated with less recidivism.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s the group of Canadian RNR scholars produced several meta-analyses investigating the impact of staff practices on client outcomes.
Specifically, they attempted to capture the core correctional practices within existing studies. The first set of meta-analyses included a mix of studies ranging from family functional therapy to “the deterrent influence of corporal punishment on prisoners who have been whipped” (Andrews et al., 1990; Dowden, 1998). A later meta-analysis, however, did remove all punishment interventions (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Perhaps the strongest research backing belongs to the cognitive-behavioral components of the practices included in the training models (Wilson et al., 2005). Specifically, interpersonal problem-solving (it's unclear how this might be similar or different to personal-emotional problem-solving noted in the CaVIC study) and anger control have been shown to produce positive outcomes in correctional populations (Lipsey et al., 2007).

A key takeaway from the extant literature on the core correctional practices is that most of the evidence for their effectiveness comes from group-based interventions. From this, scholars argue, “it is reasonable to expect that these principles are also relevant in the case of one-on-one supervision of offenders in the community” (Bourgeon et al., 2012, pg. 28). Some critics have revisited the evidence on the RNR model and found issues ranging from conflating correlation with causation and basing claims of the model’s effectiveness on studies that do not support the claims (Basanta et al., 2018). However, even the model’s critics acknowledge its usefulness (Polaschek, 2012; Ward et al., 2012).

Based on the available evidence and the influence of the RNR model several closely related trainings emerged starting in early 2000s. These trainings include STICS, STARR, EPICS and SOARING2 (Toronjo & Taxman, 2017). A crucial difference
between more recent training models and early training models is the focus on training methods and most notably the reliance on coaching. The studies on recent training models focus more on the effect of the training. In some cases, scholars attempt to parse out the effect of coaching on officer practice and some studies do not even capture probationer outcomes. An exploration of these trainings provide insight into the need for coaching as well as the limitations with implementing coaching.

2.3 Core Correctional Practices and Coaching

Building on the success of CaVIC, Chris Trotter's work, and the various meta-analyses evaluating the core correctional practices, scholars turned their attention to better training methods. The RNR model advises agencies to promote the “clinical supervision of staff according to RNR” and notes the importance of having “monitoring, feedback, and adjustment systems” (Bonta & Andrews, 2017, pg. 177). This type of monitoring, feedback, and adjustments systems, sometimes referred to as coaching, has risen in prominence in diverse fields such as medicine (Ervin, 2005), child welfare (Barbee et al., 2011), psychology (D. Milne, 2009), teaching (Joyce & Showers, 2002) and business (Grant, 2014).

Coaching can have different forms, for example it might involve peer coaches (Joyce & Showers, 2002), front-line supervisors (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014), or outside clinical supervisors (Falender & Shafranske, 2014). In their seminal synthesis of implementation research, Fixsen et al., 2005 summarized the coaching literature and concluded confidently that coaching is crucial to improving knowledge uptake and the use of skills among staff. This makes sense considering theories of learning, which note
the need to, "adapt formal generalized knowledge (episteme) to solve specific problems in local settings and to develop phronesis, or craft knowledge” because, without such adaptation, front-line practices carry "imprints of beliefs and values that may bear little relationship with research into effective practice” (Spouse, 2001; pg. 1).

All recent RNR-based training models, STICS, STARR, EPICS, and SOARING2, include a form of coaching as the key mechanism through which officers learn the core correctional practices. Either outside researchers or trained front-line officers typically perform over several months or years. In these models, coaching focuses narrowly on improving staff use of specific practices. In STICS, STARR and EPICS coaches listen to audiotapes of officers using the skills of role clarification, effective use of disapproval, effective use of reinforcement, effective use of authority, the cognitive model, and problem solving, then score these tapes using a rating form, and then provide feedback to the officer on their use of the skill(s), noting what they did well and where they could improve. SOARING2 asked front-line supervisors to observe staff and use an observation rating form to score officer use of skills and then provide immediate feedback following the contact. A review of the studies on recent RNR-based training models shows a promising practice prone to implementation failure. Table 1 provides a summary of the evidence on the effectives of STICS, STARR, EPICS, and SOARING2 from available studies.
Table 1 Summary of Research Results on RNR Training Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unit of Study</th>
<th>Training Method</th>
<th>Officer Outcomes</th>
<th>Client Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STICS (Bonta et al. 2011)</td>
<td>52 officers</td>
<td>3-day in-person training</td>
<td>&gt;Crim needs discussed</td>
<td>Reconviction 25.3% v. 40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143 clients</td>
<td>12 boosters, 1 refresher</td>
<td>&gt;Use of CBT techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STARR (Robinson et al. 2011)</td>
<td>59 officers</td>
<td>3.5-day in-person training</td>
<td>&gt;Use of CCPs</td>
<td>Supervision Failure (mod) 16% v. 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>462 clients</td>
<td>4 boosters</td>
<td>&gt;Longer contact sessions</td>
<td>Supervision Failure (high) -- No effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPICS (Labrecque &amp; Smith, 2017)</td>
<td>43 officers</td>
<td>3-day in-person training</td>
<td>&gt;Use of CCP’s</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 coaching sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOARING2 (Duhaime &amp; Maass, 2013)</td>
<td>90 officers</td>
<td>eLearning Quarterly observations</td>
<td>Mixed.</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.1 STICS

In 2011, RNR scholars rolled out Strategic Training in Community Supervision (STICS)—strikingly similar to their friendship model from the late 1970’s—within the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Prince Edward Island. The three main components included an initial three-day training, ongoing clinical supervision of skill maintenance, and a one-day refresher workshop one-year post-training. The initial evaluation involved 80 volunteers randomly assigned into STICS training or supervision-as-usual, however 28 officers submitted no data. Researchers asked each officer to recruit two medium and four high-risk clients and submit recordings.
of their interactions at three time points.

Analyzing a total of 295 tapes (220 experimental, 75 control), researchers found that trained officers, as compared to the control group spoke significantly less about non-criminogenic needs and significantly more about criminogenic needs, especially attitude. The control group spoke significantly more about employment or education than the trained group. Trained officers were also more likely to use four of the five intervention skills from the training as compared to control officers. In comparing the recidivism rates researchers did not find significant differences when simply comparing the treatment and control post-training groups. They did find significant differences between the retrospective and prospective recidivism rates within the treatment group (46.7% vs. 25.3%). They also found significant differences when they combined the retrospective control, retrospective treatment, and prospective control into one large post hoc comparison group and compared it to the prospective treatment group’s recidivism rate (44.1% vs. 25.3%).

The STICS study had trouble maintaining participation over the course of the study. Bourgon et al. (2010) noted, “in spite of our efforts to maintain motivation and enhance participation, 35 percent of the original volunteer officers did not provide any post-assignment data to the project. It is important to note that most of the officers who did not submit post-assignment data cited reasons concerning additional workload” (pg. 13). This is concerning as submitting audio tapes for review is a core component of the model. This is something that the training models require officers to do as a course of continuous professional development. If the most motivated among them (ostensibly) had
difficultly, it is hard to imagine how it could become common practice.

Soon after its rollout, RNR scholars in the United States met with STICS developers and devised nearly identical trainings within the United States. The United States federal probation system tested Staff Training to Reduce Rearrests (STARR), while county-level probation offices tested Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS).

2.3.2 STARR

The STARR study closely mirrored that of STICS. Robinson et al. (2012) assigned 88 officers from eight federal probation districts into treatment or supervision-as-usual. After losing 29 officers, the final sample comprised 59 officers - 38 in experimental and 21 in control. The training included a three and a half day in person training plus four voluntary one-hour booster sessions over the course of one year. Like the STICS study, researchers coded audiotapes collected at predetermined intervals – one pre-training, up to ten during initial meeting with clients, then three and six months later. Outcomes included officer use of core correctional practices and probationer rearrests at 12 months. Robinson et al. (2012) found trained officers were significantly more likely to use the skill of role clarification in the first meeting, to discuss cognitions, peers, and impulsivity at each taping interval, and to more frequently employ an intervention called the cognitive model. Trained officers were also more likely to use other intervention skills, but only in the first three months. Robinson et al. note that the training impact may have plateaued at the six-month mark, or it may be a function of the dearth of tape submissions at the six-month mark which they note, “became so small that the
percentages became somewhat unstable” (2012, pg. 183). Unlike STICS, the STARR study found significant differences in recidivism both within the treatment group pre-post analysis and between the treatment and control groups post-training. Interestingly, this difference only held for probationers classified as moderate risk. For probationers classified as higher risk both treatment and control groups saw significant decreases in recidivism. While the authors attributed this to additional training the control group may have received, it should be noted that a drop in both groups more likely indicates a naturally occurring phenomenon. And finally, while trained officers did significantly increase their use of core correctional practices, they still used the skills less than 50% of the time.

However, STARR too ran into feasibility issues with coaching. Regarding the rollout of STARR in the Federal Probation system, Clodfelter et al. (2016) noted, "it was not anticipated how cumbersome it would be to balance their new STARR responsibility with existing job requirements” (pg. 37).

2.2.3 EPICS

The content of EPICS skills is nearly indistinguishable from STARR; however, whereas STARR targets the federal system, EPICS is geared toward state and local probation. The study of STARR included four volunteer booster sessions, while the EPICS study includes a much more robust coaching structure. Labrecque and Smith (2015) did not capture client outcomes, but they did focus on the impact of coaching on officer use of skill. Like STICS and STARR, the authors randomly assigned 43 probation and parole officers who volunteered for the study from four jurisdictions into either
treatment or supervision-as-usual. The training included an initial three-day in person training followed by 24 monthly group coaching sessions lasting about one hour each, and individual feedback on audiotape submissions. Officers were to submit at least one audiotape per month to be reviewed and coded by researchers. The feedback noted which components of a skill the officer did well, and which components needed improvement. Trained officers used all skills significantly more control group officers with two exceptions – effective use of reinforcement and effective use of authority. Labrecque and Smith (2015) go further in examining the relationship between coaching and use of skill by looking longitudinally at the relationship between officer participation in coaching sessions and officer use of skill. Trained officers improved their scores at a higher rate over time as compared to the control group, which may be attributed to increased coaching. Although, there are three skills that both groups used very infrequently – effective disapproval, anticriminal modeling, and problem solving.

Like the STICS study, the EPICS study also experienced feasibility issue with tape submissions. Meant to last 24 months, the study was cut short due to the dearth of audiotape submissions after 18 months (Labrecque & Smith, 2017). Labrecque & Smith (2017) noted, “it is currently unknown how many agencies follow through with this recommendation and continue with the coaching process as intended—although conversations with several EPICS coaches and facilitators suggest that the number is probably not as high as it should be” (pg. 249).

2.3.4 SOARING2

The Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence (ACE) at George Mason
University and Carlton University, developed and piloted SOARING2 with six sites in 2012-2014. SOARING2 sought to replace the initial in-person trainings of prior models with an eLearning curriculum composed of five online modules. In addition to the eLearning curriculum, administrators at each pilot site selected at least three coaches trained via a two-day in person training with GMU staff. The coaches training focused on improving the interrater reliability of grading eLearning quizzes and scoring the use of working relationship, motivation and engagement, risk management, and problem-solving skills. Participating coaches were to complete three observations a month using an observation rating form to assess the use of skills in client interactions for a randomly selected sample of participants (Duhaime & Maass, 2013). ACE graduate students conducted monthly coaching calls with the front-line supervisors to discuss issues related to coaching. An article published in the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence newsletter, Advancing Practice, summarizes the results of the pilot. While there is no treatment versus control analysis the authors note that the summary of observation scores shows a small but statistically significant improvement in officer skill use over time (72.14% vs. 73.59% on a 100-point scale). However, this was not true for all skill categories, and some officers showed no change while others showed a decrease in skill use.

Internal call notes also reveal the difficulty many of the pilot sites had in completing the observations with notes from the pilot coaching calls indicating, “observations have been horrible, it didn’t happen” and “doesn’t really do coaching through observations – doesn’t give feedback, just takes in information” (Internal
coaching call notes, April 2013). Of the six sites, one continued with the coaching past the pilot. At a recent coaches' refresher training at that pilot site, I spoke with the coaches about their observation and feedback process. It was evident that coaches are not providing feedback but are completing the observations, and logging scores so that the agency director can see that completed the observation. The front-line supervisors reported that officers do not like observations, and they feel "judged" and "anxious" whenever it is time for observations.

2.4 Implementation science: feasibility and the missing practitioner voice

Implementation failure is a preoccupation with scientists in all human service fields including mental health (Proctor et al., 2009), health services generally (Brownson et al., 2017), nursing (Achterberg et al., 2008), school psychology (Forman et al., 2013), teaching (Joyce & Showers, 2002), and child welfare (Aarons & Palinkas, 2007).

Implementation scientists note two important components to implementing change – the technology (or the practices) and the transfer of that technology (how people learn the practices).

In their seminal overview of implementation drivers, implementation scientists Fixsen et al. (2005) identified coaching as a crucial component to improving human service practices, yet they did not find any experimental analyses of the functional components of coaching and so concluded, “thus, at this point, we know that coaching is important but we do not know (experimentally) what a coach should do or say with a practitioner to be most effective” (pg. 46). However, two recent meta-analysis have further established the efficacy of coaching on improving individual outcomes such as
learning and professional development (Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014). Of the various coaching components, two in particular show consistent positive effects on individual performance - observations combined with feedback (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kretlow & Bartholomew, 2010; Milne & Reiser, 2017). While the evidence supporting the efficacy of coaching continues to mount, a wide variety of factors have been shown to impact coaching including 1) time spent coaching (Diamond et al., 2002; Kavanagh et al., 2003; Marks & Gersten, 1998; Schoenwald et al., 2000); 2) availability of content experts; 3) leadership, organizational culture, and coaches engagement in planning (Joyce & Showers, 2002); 4) high caseloads and inadequately trained supervisors (Kavanagh et al. 2003), and 5) lack of information and skills, lack of time, inadequate staff resources, and a focus on paperwork instead of outcomes (Bond et al., 2001).

While it may be evident that coaching is crucial to improving practice within human service organizations, scholars must go beyond the extant literature on "what works" when devising a coaching model. Particularly considering the evident feasibility issues faced by all existing training models, it seems wise for scholars seeking to improve probation practices to work collaboratively and symbiotically with probation practitioners. To give voice to those working on the front lines and use those voices to inform changes to existing models.

Scholars have noted the limitations of the scientific rationalism underlying the EBP movement both within community supervision and other criminal justice and human service professions. Some argue that the EBP movement belies the complexity of
everyday work within justice and human service agencies and, in trying to convince practitioners of the merits of scientific findings, scholars often overlook and devalue the needs, habits, and interests of practitioners (Hamilton & Manias, 2009; Thacher, 2019; Willis & Mastrofski, 2018). As Taxman & Belenko (2012) note, “To date, the articulation of EBP has been primarily a top-down process, more aimed at meeting scientific concerns than clinical applications” (pg. 9). And furthermore, training models developed from a consensus process may be more successful than “innovations that are imposed from outside or above but that are not relevant to the daily work routines of line staff may not be implemented successfully” (Taxman & Belenko, 2012: pg. 108). Noted sociologist Robert Sampson echoed this sentiment in a recent New Yorker article on the limits of scientific study within the area of crime. Sampson argues, “practitioners (e.g., cops on the beat) may be better ‘theorists’ of what policy changes will trigger on the ground than academic criminologists who theorize at a considerable remove” (Hutson, 2020). There is no one better equipped to shed light the relevance of trainings than those tasked with implementing them. Understanding practitioner perspectives is imperative if scholars are to move beyond privileging scientific knowledge to incorporate the equally valuable local knowledge of practitioners.

The idea that practitioner perspectives matter is not revolutionary. Foundational diffusion and implementation theories note the influence of practitioner perspectives in whether an innovation gains traction outside of the research laboratory. In Diffusion of Innovations, Everett Rogers describes five innovation attributes that contribute to its successful diffusion. These include 1) the innovation’s relative advantage over the status
quo; 2) its compatibility with current processes; 3) its complexity; 4) its trialability, testability, and its potential for adaptation, and 5) the ability to observe the innovation’s effects (Rogers, 2003). In addition to innovation attributes, diffusion scholars note the importance of the adopters (i.e., the practitioners), the social system (i.e., the thoughts of opinion leaders and social pressures to adopt the innovation), and the individual adopter’s process. Scholars have used diffusion theory to explain processes at the micro-level, for example how and why an individual adopts an innovation, and at the macro-level, such as society-level changes in dress or manner of speech. The history of diffusion research is rich and robust and provides a strong theoretical background to many of the concepts used in implementation science and in particular implementation outcomes (Dearing, 2009; Proctor et al., 2011).

Proctor et al. (2011) conceptualize eight implementation outcomes important to an innovation’s success: acceptability, adoption, appropriateness, feasibility, fidelity, implementation cost, penetration, and sustainability. Of those, acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility in particular have been the focus of implementation scholars studying implementation efforts in the human service fields including teaching, medicine, mental health, and child welfare (Aarons, 2004; Aarons & Palinkas, 2007; Denton et al., 2003; Peters et al., 2013). While the three constructs are related, Proctor et al. (2011) maintain, and Weiner et al. (2017) confirm, that they are conceptually distinct. Procter et al. (2011) define acceptability as “the perception among implementation stakeholders that a given treatment, service, practice, or innovation is agreeable, palatable, or satisfactory” (pg. 67). In their qualitative studies of human service worker
perspectives on evidence-based practices, acceptability often emerges as a major theme related to successful implementation of the new EBP (Aarons & Palinkas, 2007). And implementation scholars often note the importance of capturing the measure during early implementation efforts.

Appropriateness, while related to acceptability is conceptually distinct. It is defined as “the perceived fit, relevance, or compatibility of the innovation or practice for a given practice setting, provider, or consumer; and/or perceived fit of the innovation to address a particular issue or problem” (pg. 69). In other words, this is a measure of the degree to which practitioners feel that the intervention or change being initiated is a stretch from their mission or is not consistent with their skill set, role, or job expectations. Theoretically a supervisor could feel comfortable with coaching, they could believe that coaching is credible, in other words they could find coaching acceptable, and still not feel that coaching is necessarily suitable or compatible with their job.

Finally, feasibility is “the extent to which a new treatment, or an innovation, can be successfully used or carried out within a given agency or setting” (pg. 69). Front-line supervisors may find coaching acceptable and appropriate, but they may identify barriers that make it untenable in their organization.

2.5 Organization and design of SUSTAIN

While coaching is integral to all evidence-informed supervision models gaining popularity within the field of corrections, each model conceptualizes coaching slightly differently. There is no standard for who within an organization should be a coach. EPICS trains peer coaches, STARR uses a mix of officers and front-line supervisors who
volunteer to be STARR coaches, STICS hired additional staff at participating agencies to act as internal coaches, and SOARING2 trained front-line supervisors.

The use of front-line supervisors arguably gets an organization closer to wholesale organizational change as it involves another crucial layer in the change effort. Within probation, supervisor duties historically have been almost exclusively administrative, focusing on interpreting policy and ensuring adherence (Kras, Rudes, et al., 2017; Labrecque & Smith, 2017; Rudes, 2012). Despite the fact that the importance of front-line supervisors in organizational change is well-established, they are often left out of training initiatives (Kras et al., 2019; Kras, Portillo, et al., 2017; Kras, Rudes, et al., 2017; Rudes, 2012). In this respect, probation might use social work as a model for implementing coaching within agencies.

2.5.1 Social work and psychology models for SUSTAIN coaching

The field of social work began using a form of clinical supervision, usually referred to as educative supervision, in the early 20th century, however, it did not become a standard recommendation until the 1970’s. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) make the case that in addition to administrative and supportive functions, social work supervisors need an educative function because most social workers come to the job with little-to-no prior training, and in-service trainings are generic and do not provide the necessary one-on-one training to meet the needs of a “particular worker carrying a particular caseload, encountering particular problems, and needing individualized program of education.” (pg. 91). While there are no comparable national surveys on the training of probation officers, it is reasonable to assess that the situation is similar and perhaps even more pronounced.
within the field of probation within the United States. The job of probation officers requires a bachelor’s degree, but no specialized field of study, nor any specialized postgraduate training. Using Kadushin and Harkness as a framework to introduce coaching within community supervision is a useful tool as the fields are similar in many important ways. However, when it comes to the practices of coaching, the field of psychology offers more empirical guidance on what works to improve competency and reflection.

The field of psychology began using clinical supervision to improve therapists confidence and competency in the 1920s and since that time the field has worked to establish standards and competencies for clinical supervisors (Falender & Shafranske, 2014). There have also been ongoing efforts to study the process empirically to determine mechanisms of action in clinical supervision (Milne, 2009). The practice of clinical supervision is much more established than in other helping professions, and perhaps no one has done more in the way of empirically testing clinical supervision within the field of psychology than Derek Milne. Using a best evidence synthesis approach of 24 studies on clinical supervision, Milne et al (2008) distilled 26 supervision interventions (e.g., teaching and instruction, corrective feedback, observations, goal setting, and use of questions) and 28 associated outcomes (e.g., changes to the supervisees’ attitudes, increased emotional self-awareness, changes in supervisees' motivation, and improved skills). From this Milne et al (2008) delineated a basic model of supervision rooted in David Kolb’s experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). Kolb’s theory puts experience at the heart of learning. In the experiential learning model, a person turns experience into knowledge via four modes of learning--two related to
grasping and two to transforming, which Kolb displays as a cycle. Figure 1 displays these four modes of learning.

![Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle](image.png)

Figure 1: Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

Kolb proffers that individuals have a natural inclination to learn via a particular method and that we make constant choices about whether we prefer to learn by doing or by analyzing. Milne’s model of clinical supervision tasks clinical supervisors with facilitating learning through experience by helping clinicians engage in all modes of learning. For example, they might ask them to recall how they experienced a particular session (concrete experience), then they might ask them to reflect on that experience to think about it differently (reflective observation) or put what they experienced within the larger context of what they know theoretically about a particular behavior (abstract conceptualization). They might also get them to try something new in the next session (active experimentation). Milne et al. (2008) showed that supervision activities could be
described and measured. In the years since, Milne has refined his model of clinical supervision and the measurements tools used to study the intervention.

Researchers at the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence fashioned the SUSTAIN coaching model after Milne & Reiner's (2017) integrated model for evidence-based cognitive-behavioral supervision and its associated instrument the Supervision: Adherence and Guidance Evaluation (SAGE). The SAGE identifies the following ten clinical supervision skills: managing, agenda-setting, formulating, questioning, prompting, demonstrating, teaching, training/experimenting, evaluating, and feedback. In the SUSTAIN coaches’ training introduces front-line probation to modified versions of these skills and asks coaches to use them to facilitate learning among their staff.

2.5.2 Updates to SOARING2

The training under study, Staff Undertaking Skills to Advance Innovation (SUSTAIN), is an updated version SOARING2. The previous training consisted of five eLearning modules and the development of in-house coaches. The SOARING2 eLearning modules covered the following topics: risk-need-responsivity principles, motivating and engaging individuals under supervision, case planning, problem solving with individuals under supervision, and fostering desistance from crime. SUSTAIN added a sixth eLearning module called Criminal Lifestyle, and integrated EPICS-II skills throughout the eLearning curriculum. The SOARING2 coaching model sought to improve officers’ use of 20 skills – five working relationship skills, five engagement and motivation skills, five risk management skills, and five problem solving skills using regular observations and feedback sessions. The model required coaches to complete the
eLearning and then participate in a two-day in-person training, which focused heavily on inter-rater reliability on grading officers’ eLearning quizzes and scoring officers’ use of 20 skills. SOARING2 required coaches to complete three to five observations per officer, per quarter and enter those scores into an online survey. Table 2 outlines the differences between SOARING2 and SUSTAIN. The most notable changes come in both the content of the coaches' training and the training mechanism. Quality coaching in SOARING2 was evidenced by accurate scoring of quizzes and scoring of skills in use. ACE researchers instructed coaches to conduct regular observations (three to five per officer, per quarter) and give officers feedback immediately following the observation. ACE researchers told coaches to follow an ask-share-ask-share method of giving feedback but did not give any further instruction on coaching practices. A critical part of the observations was scoring the officers' use of skills and the coaches' training focused heavily on practice scoring a set of twenty skills. ACE researchers also instructed coaches to enter their observation scores online so that researchers at GMU could produce summary reports on the observation data.
Table 2: Differences Between SOARING2 and SUSTAIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SOARING2</th>
<th>SUSTAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Five eLearning modules</td>
<td>Updated eLearning content, six eLearning modules, integrated EPICS throughout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-day coaches training focused on grading and scoring 20 skills using a zero to three rating scale.</td>
<td>Expanded coaches training to include two introductory webinars and five booster sessions, new focus of coaches training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaches responsibilities: grade advanced quizzes, conduct three to five per officer observations quarterly, score use of 20 skills, and engaged in feedback sessions after each observation.</td>
<td>Coaches responsibilities: grade advanced quizzes, conduct three to five per officer observations quarterly, score use of 15 skills, and engage in feedback sessions after each observation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Coaching Competencies: None identified</td>
<td>Core Coaching Competencies: 1) Knowledge of EBPs; 2) Quality working relationships with officers; 3) Effective communication skills; 4) Facilitating individual learning, and 5) Group Coaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5.3 SUSTAIN coaches training

SUSTAIN expanded the coaches' training both in terms of what coaches learn and how they learn it, although some components of SOARING2 remained. Participants identified as potential coaches (either all or some subset of front-line supervisors) attend two, one-hour introductory kick-off webinars that cover evidence-based practices generally and coaching specifically. These webinars are informal and serve as an introduction between prospective coaches and the trainer. Following the introductory webinars, the trainees complete basic and intermediate lessons in six modules in the eLearning curriculum. Participants then attend an intensive two-day, in-person training focused on the core coaching competencies listed in Table 2. The training also reinforces the trainee's knowledge of EBPs by having them perform teach-backs of the eLearning material. During this training they also learn about the skills involved with facilitating...
individual learning (See Appendix B). The trainer introduces the observation rating form and the front-line supervisors practice scoring the skills while watching role-plays. They then practice coaching. Specifically, they practice engaging in a feedback discussion, using questions to help an officer reflect, and using other coaching skills such as teaching or modeling, and finally the trainer introduces the concept of group coaching.

The training uses a combination of methods including didactic teaching, group discussion, role plays, videos, and enactive practice. Following the in-person training, coaches have several weeks to complete the eLearning. All of this, collectively referred to as the "beginning development of supervisors into coaches" occurs within the first few months of a two-year project. The interviews for this study took place after the two-day in-person training while coaches are working on completing the eLearning, but before any subsequent training that coaches will eventually receive.
Chapter 3: Methods

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

-Zora Neale Hurston

To understand practitioner perspectives on the SUSTAIN coaching model, this study interviewed the front-line supervisors training to be coaches at four separate agencies. This chapter describes the sample and research methods employed to understand these important practitioner perspectives. Because front-line supervisors do not exist in a vacuum, this chapter also aims to provide more context on agency climate by reviewing the agency's website, impressions from each training, and some results from an organizational survey that measured aspects of agency climate. Additionally, because agencies do not exist in a vacuum this chapter includes news stories or other relevant events that help paint a picture of the community in which the agency exists.

3.1 Sample

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 22 supervisors (two directors, one training supervisor, and nineteen front-line supervisors) in four agencies in the beginnings stages of SUSTAIN implementation. This purposeful sample represents those who volunteered to complete the interview following completion of a two-day in-person coaches’ training in four county-level probation agencies in three states. Three out of seven supervisors at Galbraith County, all five at Hooks County, eleven out of 19 at
Tiptree County, and three out of 19 from Eliot County agreed to the interview. Each site initially identified the participants as coaches.

I used various recruitment techniques as some recruitment techniques initially failed to garner enough volunteers. I gave Galbraith County participants a sheet of paper at the end of the two-day in-person training with several date and time options and asked them to circle their choice or write “not interested” if they choose not to participate. I told participants at Hooks County about the interviews at the end of the two-day training and then sent a follow-up email after asking for their participation. Initially the study was to include another site; however, only one individual out of 16 front-line supervisors at that site volunteered to complete the interview, and so I decided that participants would be recruited from the next set of upcoming trainings scheduled for April of that same year. Understanding the need to improve recruiting efforts, I made a greater push during the Tiptree County training than in previous attempts. I told Tiptree County participants about the interview on day one of the in-person training and put a sign-up list out on the table at the entrance way and left it there for the remaining two days. Over the two-day training I twice reminded participants about signing up. I did not recruit as strongly in Eliot County as this training required more in the way of motivating staff to fully participate in the training than did the Tiptree County group, and so I made the decision to focus on the material and answer questions related to the project's implementation rather than ask about additional participation. However, participants received a follow-up email after the training asking supervisors to participate in the interviews. Of the three
Eliot County front-line supervisors who agreed to the interview, one mentioned that he was sent to the interview with several questions from other front-line supervisors.

Following Maxwell's (2013) assertion that analysis and design are inextricably linked, it is important to situate the interviews within the larger contextual framework from which I would draw assumptions, hypothesis and interpretations of meaning. I had a prior relationship with each interviewee. My experiences with each site, which at the point of the interview involved two webinars, an intensive two-day training, varied number of pre- and post-training email exchanges, and conversations between myself and each of my contacts all heavily influenced my impressions of both the individuals and their agencies. During and after each in-person training, I jotted short notes to myself to make notes of training participation, quotes of interest, and my general impressions of the training. I also included discussions with agency partners that shed light on organizational issues I may not have been otherwise privy to.

Each county also had the option to complete an organizational survey. Three of the four sites opted to have a survey sent out to staff before the start of the project. For those three sites, that survey data is included as a part of the site’s description. For a description of survey methods, see Appendix D. The survey included two scales that help paint a picture of the organizational context for each site. The two scales measure the degree to which respondents believed the organization has a climate conducive to learning (Orthner et al., 2006), and respondents cynicism regarding the organization’s ability to change (Tesluk et al., 1995). Only Eliot County opted out of the survey - the first and only county to do so in the project’s history.
Table 3 details the demographics of study participants. Four front-line supervisors from Hooks County participated in a single interview, therefore I did not include some individual background questions from that interview. Gender was split evenly with 11 women and 11 men participating. Tenure with the agency ranged from four years to 31 years, and tenure as a supervisor ranged from one month to 24 years. The four sites differed from each other in many ways including size, geographic location, experience with evidence-informed practices, how the agency sought out the SUSTAIN program, and experiences in the two-day training. The following sections provide background on each site including relevant news stories from the site that reflects some of the context in which the site exists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Gender (Gender)</th>
<th>Tenure (in Years)</th>
<th>Supervisor Tenure (in Years)</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Call Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1 mo.</td>
<td>Galbraith</td>
<td>43:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 mos.</td>
<td>Galbraith</td>
<td>33:48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Galbraith</td>
<td>52:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Hooks</td>
<td>28:68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zach*</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hooks</td>
<td>31:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hooks</td>
<td>31:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hooks</td>
<td>31:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosie*</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>Hooks</td>
<td>31:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>23:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>33:34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>28:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>36:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>45:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>33:52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>45:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhiannon</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>37:27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonia</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>37:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>35:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Tiptree</td>
<td>30:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Eliot</td>
<td>44:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eliot</td>
<td>45:41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kieron</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Eliot</td>
<td>1:21:28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

40
3.1.2 Galbraith County

Galbraith County is a small agency located in the western region of the United States overseeing approximately 470 (misdemeanor and felony) probationers, 45 juveniles in the community, and four juveniles in juvenile hall. The agency’s website includes links to a polished looking quarterly newsletter that recognizes staff achievements, provides legislative updates, discusses new initiatives, welcomes new staff members, informs of community events, highlights probationer success stories, and includes other various articles of interest such as recipes or disaster preparedness tips.

Galbraith County has a rich history of implementing new practices including motivational interviewing (in both community and juvenile hall), moral reconation therapy (in juvenile hall), and aggression replacement training (in juvenile hall), and family functional probation with juvenile caseloads. The agency uses the Correctional System and Intervention Assessment (CAIS) as their risk assessment tool.

The site included seven total coaches - the adult program manager, two front-line supervisors from adult probation, the juvenile program manager, two front-line supervisors from juvenile community probation, one front-line supervisor from juvenile hall. See Figure 1 for an overview of the organizational chart. The decision process of deciding on the coach in juvenile hall is unclear. They decided to have the director of juvenile hall go through the coaches’ training as the juvenile hall was facing closure at the start of the project. The reasoning was that if the juvenile hall director was pulled back to the community side the organization wanted him trained in coaching (recently,
the juvenile hall was renamed and repurposed to a youth development center). The juvenile hall supervisor who was chosen had been promoted one month prior so it may be that they wanted someone who could start their supervisory career off with a coaching approach to management.

Figure 2: Galbraith County Organizational Chart

This agency has a prior history with the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence. For the past two years, officers supervising adult probationers have used a decision support tool developed by the Center. The ACE project manager of that decision support tool told the agency about SUSTAIN, and when the agency received a state grant to help implement evidence-informed practices, they contacted ACE to implement SUSTAIN.
The two-day training started with two front-line supervisors expressing frustration over the eLearning before the start of the training on day one with one sarcastically asking the other what he thought of the eLearning and that supervisor responding, “don’t even get me started on the eLearning.” Galbraith County was the first site to receive the newly revised coaches’ training. The two-day, in-person training included eight units rather than the current six. Several comments from participants left the impression that the training could be improved including asking if the training was geared for larger audiences, advising me to revisit the training’s break schedule, and one interviewee saying during the post-training interview, “Just to be very direct, I don’t feel like I got a lot of knowledge or information or training on coaching in that two days.” There were also two front-line supervisors (not included in the interviews) who missed sections of either day one or day two.

During the two-day training, front-line supervisors often discussed potential barriers to coaching, or issues they would like to address with staff. I was surprised to learn from the supervisors that contacts between officers and probationers often lasted an hour, and that staff would speak at length with probationers though not necessarily about anything of substance. One aspect that is unique to this site is their dealings with the sovereign citizen population. Sovereign citizens ascribe to the idea that they exist outside of any official governance system and are therefore not bound to any laws. And, supervisors said these were the hardest cases their staff dealt with.
3.1.2 Hooks County

Hooks County is a medium sized agency located in the south-central region of the United States that supervises approximately 3,500 adult felony and misdemeanor probationers. The agency’s website has limited functionality and appears to focus on collecting fees from probationers. Featured prominently in the middle of the page in all red capital letters bolded and underlined is a link directing users to “Make Online Probation Payments.” This link then takes the user to large flashing stop sign with detailed instructions cautioning the user how to properly make their payment.

Other than implementing a risk/need assessment, Hooks County has a limited history of implementing human service practices; however, the agency’s deputy director is a certified training officer for the state’s risk assessment. This volunteer position requires him to travel at least twice a year to train new probation officers in the use of the risk/need assessment. The coaches included the agency’s deputy director and all of four of the agency’s front-line supervisors. Figure 3 provides an overview of the organizational chart.
The site was a beneficiary of a grant for the purpose of implementing SUSTAIN in up to ten probation agencies throughout the state. Of the nine interested counties, Hooks County was one of two that moved forward with the process. The Hooks County Deputy Director was enthusiastic about implementing SUSTAIN.

During the two-day training in February 2019, front-line supervisors expressed excitement over the prospect of training and coaching staff on the use of evidence-informed practices. While discussing how they might use Socratic questioning to deepen officer’s critical thinking during a case staffing, one front-line supervisor said, “I can hear the angels singing.” Participants all agreed that this was just what they needed to help improve practice. Kick-off with staff typically happens within six weeks to two months after the in-person coaches’ training; however, the Hooks County front-line supervisors requested a June kickoff date due to some expected upcoming staff turnover. When June came staff asked for a September kickoff, as according to the front-line supervisors the
level of turnover they were expecting was high enough to cause some anxiety over rolling out anything new. As September neared the front-line supervisors were reluctant to let me know that they wanted to postpone again until January 2020 as they explained that they had experienced “unprecedented” levels of turnover. As of this writing, Hooks County has not moved forward with implementing SUSTAIN beyond the coaches’ training.

November 2019, a nonpartisan watchdog group, published a report on Hooks County's justice system describing it as “deeply troubling” and “fraught with perils” in which indigent defendants are routinely given legal counsel by jailers, cajoled into waiving right to council, and required to pay back fees when they do request council. While Hooks County justice system officials acknowledge that the system is troubling, they have so far opted not to pursue establishing a funded public defender’s office. While it is hard to know the degree to which this affects practices within the probation department, it is illuminating especially considering the agency’s focus on collecting fees. It is also important to note that probation agencies are often at the mercy of the judicial system. While probation officers are tasked with being "change agents" judges set a person's conditions of supervision and judges can override probation officer decisions.

3.1.3 Tiptree County

Tiptree County is a large major metropolitan agency located in the southwest United States, which oversees approximately 53,000. The agency’s website is robust and professional looking and includes current and archived issues of the agency’s newsletter
which recognizes staff achievements, feeds back the results of a recently completed studies, spotlights a successful probationer story, and provides reviews of several presentations at the annual Association of Probation and Parole conference.

The county has a long rich history of implementing evidence-informed practices as well as partnering with universities. The county is currently implementing Core Correctional Solutions, LLC’s Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS-II) throughout several units and the The Carey Group, Inc’s Risk Reduction program to other supervision units. New front-line supervisors go through a six-month leadership academy that includes training on Crucial Conversations, the communication techniques included in SUSTAIN. Tiptree County rolled out SUSTAIN to the Intensive Supervision Units only. Figure 4 shows the organizational chart for Tiptree County. ISP front-line supervisors work in all divisions including the sex offender division. The project is part of a grant to implement evidence-informed practices.
During the two-day training, participants demonstrated a wide range of perspectives on the utility of the coaching model as presented. The second half of day two included an hour-long conversation about the use of the observation rating form. Participants disagreed on how it should be used and what it should include. The one director in the room, described by those who knew him as a champion of evidence-informed practices and coaching, suggested changing it to a yes/no, rather than have a rating system. A minority expressed that this would not capture the ability or need for growth. There was also a mixture of front-line supervisors, some of which had gone through the EPICS-II training themselves and were current EPICS-II coaches, some whose staff had gone through the EPICS-II training, and others whose staff had gone through Mark Carey’s Risk Reduction training.
3.1.4 Eliot County

Eliot County is a moderately large agency located in the south western United States and overseeing approximately 8,000 adult probationers. The agency’s website includes a home page with several links most of which take the user to a brief definition of the link’s label (e.g., supervision services, intensive probation services). The one exception is the link to the agency’s annual report.

The agency tasked all front-line supervisors under the field services division with becoming coaches. Figure 5 shows the organizational chart for Eliot County.

![Figure 5: Eliot County Organizational Chart](image)

The project is part of a grant to implement evidence-informed practices in the agency.
During the two-day training, participants noted that Eliot County officers have more responsibilities than officers in other counties, specifically officers serve warrants and make arrests (two years ago a probation officer shot and killed a probationer as he attempted to serve a warrant for the probationer’s arrest). I noted a few instances of discord among staff throughout the two-day training. When a participant, not versed in the EPICS-II skills, demonstrated an EPICS-II skill, another EPICS-II-trained supervisor rolled her eyes. Preempting any comment from the EPICS-II-trained front-line supervisors, a third supervisor commented that while the non-EPICS-II trained supervisor may not have executed the skill following the skills steps, he offers a lot more in his ability to council officers. In another instance during a group exercise, one supervisor expressed disagreement with her colleagues over how to complete the assignment and picked up her training manual and tossed it down to the table in frustration saying if that she can’t even understand the exercise how is she supposed to coach her officers? This prompted eye rolls from two other front-line supervisors at the table. I also noted this discord after the training when one supervisor accused another supervisor of passing one of her students on an eLearning quiz after she had failed the student. She noted she had heard about it "through the rumor mill." Participants also noted during the training that there would soon be turnover of the entire leadership team including the chief and all division directors. As of this writing the director that attended the in-person training has retired.
In looking at the results of the organizational survey for the three counties that completed it, Galbraith County similarly with Tiptree County on the climate scale. Although Galbraith County had a slightly higher average, they both scored at the top end of the moderate range. Hooks County scored in the middle of the moderate range on this scale. On this 16-item climate scale, participants gauge on a Likert scale of one to four various structural and cultural dimensions of organizational learning. More specifically, the survey includes items on 1) the organization's support for innovation; 2) perceptions
of the freedom to discuss and test ideas that may not always work out; 3) perception that
the organization encourages developing goals and long-range objectives; 4) the belief that
staff regularly meet together to learn from each other and review program progress
measures; 5) the belief that staff set measurable outcomes and make plans to achieve
them, and 6) the belief that staff actively share their program successes with each other
and with other related organizations (Orthner et al., 2006).

The other scale of interest was the cynicism for change scale. This five-item
scale also uses a four-point Likert scale to measure the belief that the organization has the
ability to change and make improvement (Tesluk et al., 1995). Hooks County scored
highest on cynicism regarding the agency’s ability to change. Both Galbraith County and
Tiptree County scored in the low range with Galbraith County scoring in the very low
range.

3.2 Data Collection

I obtained approval through the George Mason internal review board (IRB) prior
to data collection. I conducted phone interviews, lasting approximately 30 minutes to one
hour each, within one month of the in-person coaches’ training. See Table 3 for a
breakdown in call times. The first in-person training occurred November 27-28, 2018,
with the next one occurring February 13-14, 2019, the third occurred April 4-5, 2019, and
the fourth April 22-23, 2019.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and I informed participants that their
interviews were confidential and provided them the IRB-approved informed consent via
email. Before the start of the interview, I explained confidentially expectations as
outlined on the informed consent and the purpose of the interview, which I explained, was to create a mechanism for practitioner input that may influence further implementation efforts of coaching within their agency. All who agreed to participate verbally consented before the start of the interview.

At the start of the interview I advised participants to be honest and provide example or details when possible. I did not read the interview guide (See Appendix E) verbatim, but often did ask the questions in the order presented on the guide. I tried to ensure that the conversation felt natural and often reflected back what a respondent said to ensure I understood them correctly. In a couple of instances, I clarified questions when it seemed that the respondent did not understand my meaning. I aimed for a natural conversation which did not feel like an interrogation. I also tried to ensure that I did not ask leading questions or provide leading examples. I tried to let respondents talk for as long as they wanted but occasionally, I had to redirect the conversation when a respondent began to get off topic. During the interviews I wrote notes as the participant spoke to help me stay focused. I recorded all interviews using Tape-A-Call and had them transcribed by a professional transcription service, Landmark Associations.

Table 5 provides a timeline of events for each site. Before the interview, participants were supposed to complete two introductory webinars, basic and intermediate lessons in six eLearning modules, and a two-day in-person coaches’ training. It may be that a coach missed one or both introductory webinars (as is the case Galbraith County who had no participation in webinar 1 and less than full participation in webinar 2). I sent a recording of the introductory webinars to all would-be coaches.
including those who could not attend. Coaches may also take more or less time to complete the basic and intermediate lessons. Some coaches may reach out to me during this time for technical assistance while others will not. None of the coaches interviewed missed any part of the in-person two-day training.

Table 5: Timeline of Events by Site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Galbraith (n=3)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Wx, E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hooks (n=5)</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Wx</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiptree (n=11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wx</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliot (n=3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wx</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*S=Org surveys, Wx=webinars, E=eLearning, T=in-person training, X=data collection, interviews, A=Analysis, W*

3.3 Data Analysis

The analytic process involved a bricolage of methods as noted by Kvale (2007) including noting patterns and themes, clustering, counting, making contrasts/comparisons, and making conceptual/theoretical coherence, among others (pgs. 16-17). The analytic plan was most influenced by Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2020). I analyzed the data over the course of several cycles – starting with coding, then sub coding, then patterning, with jottings and analytic memos throughout, and finally themes. I listened to the interviews immediately after they were recorded. While listening, I occasionally jotted down very brief ideas of themes I felt emerging. Once the interviews
were transcribed, I listened to them again, as I read the transcription. This allowed me to get a sense of my data and ensure the transcripts were accurate. I then combined any notes I jotted down during the interview with the interview transcription.

To begin the process of coding, I first separated the data into four sections: 1) questions related to background; 2) questions about changes over time; 3) questions about key responsibilities, and finally 4) my main thesis questions about acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility. I created four separate Microsoft Word documents for each. I first coded the questions related to background for housekeeping items (e.g., gender and tenure) also referred to as “attribute coding” (Tesluk et al., 1995). The initial coding was deductive in that I was looking for specific patterns, themes, and clustering out of a predetermined framework (Implementation Science). But I allowed for inductive analysis particularly in the development of sub codes and themes I did not anticipate. The first round of coding focused on the main concepts of interest, acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility. These codes related to the main components of each concept as identified in the literature (e.g., codes within the concept of acceptability included content, complexity, comfort and credibility) (Proctor et al., 2011). These codes acted as “prompts or triggers for deeper reflection on the data’s meaning.” (Miles, Huberman & Saldano, 2020, Pg. 117).

Throughout the coding process I relied both on memos and on a matrix to facilitate analytic thinking (Maxwell, 2013). Throughout the original Word document, I also noted instances of personal reactions to some remarks (e.g., red flags that indicated the participant might not have grasped a concept I was asking about). I also noted what
the relationship felt like (e.g., I may not have probed as much with a participant I felt was not as on board with the training), or doubts about the quality of some of the data (e.g., when a participant couched their responses and it felt as if the answers were socially desirable). I also noted second thoughts about some of the interview questions (e.g., asking about the training itself when most participants did not have substantive feedback and it often felt disjointed, or realizing that some of the questions about acceptability may not accurately capture the concept as participants did not have enough experience with the components to really be able to comment on their acceptability).

I also crafted several analytic memos including things I found intriguing, surprising, my code choices and their definitions, emerging concepts, themes, stories, problems I had with the study (e.g., limitations to the study), and tentative answers to my research questions (Miles, 2020). Reflections included notes to ensure I did not allow salient or colorful interviews overshadow themes that may be more prevalent but less salient, always keep in mind the relationship I had formed with the participants, and the consequence of my method of data chunking.

As I am the creator of the training, a component of the interviewing process and data analysis process necessarily involved constant reflexive self-analysis. I found myself swinging between feelings of pessimism and optimism, as I read about barriers and coping strategies that coaches employed. As this project relates to my work, I often found myself having thoughts on ways to improve the training, or ideas about what might be happening at a site. Occasionally it occurred to me to write down thoughts such as why I
became interested in this project to begin with, as that also influences my assumptions and biases.

Making the matrix helped to clarify codes, and I found myself reconsidering which concepts certain statements illustrated. Using Excel, I created tabs for Acceptability, Appropriateness, and Feasibility. Within each tab I broke down the concept by its components identified in the literature. I then more deeply explored the nuances of the components.

Proctor et al. (2011) breaks down the concept of acceptability into the following components: comfort with practices, satisfaction with practices, satisfaction with the complexity of the practice, and satisfaction with the credibility of the practice. After coding for those components and then rereading the quotes, comfort and satisfaction collapsed into one component. This was done because on reflection it is likely that respondents did not have enough experience to accurately appraise their comfort with coaching let alone comment separately on both their comfort and satisfaction with the practices. In that way, this measure is not as a true a measure of acceptability as those identified in the literature (e.g., EBPAS50). I coded responses to whether the interviewee was comfortable with coaching as either positive, negative, or mixed, then further coded for which skill the individual noted as being comfortable or uncomfortable with. I also coded the reason which helped inform the placement of the individual into one of four levels – comfortable, mostly comfortable, slightly comfortable, and not comfortable. I did not include complexity and credibility as few respondents commented directly on the complexity of coaching as it related to their acceptance of the practices, comments related
to the complexity tended to be fall under feasibility, so I explore it explored there. Likewise only two people directly commented on the credibility of coaching with one saying, “It seems that the direct coaching is highly effective” and the other commenting, “I just think it’s difficult and I know a lot of us would like to see how effective it is before submersing our self in it.”

Appropriateness is the perceived fit, relevance, or compatibility of coaching. Appropriateness encompasses the perception of whether the agency needs coaching and the degree to which it is a “stretch” from supervisor’s current roles. I asked front-line supervisors what agency need, if any, coaching could meet, how useful coaching was for meeting that need, who should have the primary responsibility for staff development, and how compatible coaching was to current managerial practices. Proctor et al. (2011) break down the concept of appropriateness into the following subcomponents: relevance, usefulness, compatibility, suitability, and practicality. After coding the data for these components and then adding the coded data to a matrix spreadsheet, it was evident that relevance and usefulness could be collapsed into a single code and compatibility and suitability should as well. Issues of practicality tended to overlap with feasibility issues, so I cover it in that section. I used in-vivo coding on the relevance/usefulness code. It also became evident that two of the background questions informed this concept. Specifically, "What do you consider to be your three top responsibilities?" and "How would you describe your supervisory style?" both informed the degree to which officers view coaching practices as a suitable or compatible with their role as a supervisor. Towards the end of my coding process, I realized that the background questions asked at the beginning
of the interview were pertinent here. I asked front-line supervisors about their current top three responsibilities, which bears directly on the degree to which coaching is a "stretch" for them.

Finally, I coded feasibility by first noting the barriers respondents mentioned with trying to coach officers. Once I had a list of barriers I looked back over it to get a sense of the relationship between these barriers and then recoded to reduce the number of codes as many were related (e.g., having different shifts than officers or working out of a different building would both be considered "logistical issues"). Within some feasibility codes I was able to further break the barrier down into various issues (e.g., "leadership" as a barrier includes both "Weak leadership commitment" and "No implementation guidance"). I also parsed out program attributes that could contribute to feasibility issues. And finally, I found that many respondents were offering up "coping strategies" throughout the course of the interview so that became a code as well. I chose not to include the numerical answer to the question of how respondents would score their agency's preparedness on a scale of 1 to 10, as their reasoning for the number was more informative than the number they provided. I also did not ask all respondents that question if it did not flow naturally into the course of the interview, or they had already spoken at length on the topic.
Chapter 4: Findings

Albert grunted. "Do you know what happens to lads who ask too many questions?"
Mort thought for a moment.
"No," he said eventually, "what?"
There was silence.
Then Albert straightened up and said, "Damned if I know. Probably they get answers and serve 'em right.

— Terry Pratchett, Mort

There were both general themes that appeared across sites as well as site-specific themes. Before exploring the site-specific themes that emerged, I present findings across sites related to perceptions of acceptability, appropriateness, and feasibility. Briefly, respondents found coaching practices to be acceptable and appropriate to their job as a front-line supervisor. Of particular interest, was respondent's perceptions of giving feedback, which is a core coaching skill. When asked to identify a need that coaching met, respondents identified several needs many of which fell outside of the educative function. Respondents also noted several important feasibility issues, each of which helps shed light on the context in which trainings like SUSTAIN are enacted. The equivocation and ambiguity in supervisor responses, particularly in relation to perceptions of acceptability and appropriateness also provide insight into what it means to be a front-line supervisor in probation today, which has implications for the future of coaching in front-line supervision.
4.1 Acceptability and changes in self-perception and identity

Supervisors evidenced a range of comfort with coaching from quite comfortable to not comfortable at all. As shown in Figure 6, nine individuals expressed relatively unequivocally that they were comfortable with the practice of coaching and then following their statement of being comfortable, they detailed the skills with which they were most comfortable. For example:

“I feel comfortable in that role. I think just having the experience with the EPICS tools it rolls really in line with the way the coaches training that I attended for the EPICS side of things. It's very much in line with that, so I felt very comfortable.”

-Rachel (Tiptree County)

Figure 6: Comfort with Coaching Practices
Those nine individuals categorized as "comfortable" included two directors and two in-house training specialists, and the remaining were trained as EPICS-II coaches. The rest of the group equivocated to varying degrees. Eight individuals expressed comfort but then qualified their answer by saying that they still wanted further training in some aspect of coaching. However, these individuals went on to list the skills they were most looking forward to using and were generally optimistic about coaching. For example, this supervisor who initially expressed ambivalence:

“To really answer the question, I think I’m somewhere in between. I’m not fully comfortable, obviously because the problem is that I don’t have a case load so I’m not able to practice the things that we’re gonna be talking about. That kinda sucks. I understand them to the point where I think I could explain the specific tools to our officers.”

- Tiffany (Tiptree County)

But then later the same supervisor expressed optimism about coaching and her use of coaching practices:

"I want to do the feedback form. The way the feedback is set up is really to ask them what they think they did good. Tell ‘em what they did good, ask them what we can work on, and tell them what we can work on. I want to incorporate that in everything. With the file reviews, with the eval. Obviously, the words will have to change a little bit, but that’s one that I am definitely going to do a better job at using”

- Tiffany (Tiptree County)
Two individuals appeared "slightly comfortable" These individuals stated that they were comfortable with being a coach but then qualified their answers greatly and expressed pessimism about their ability to address what they would need to feel comfortable. For example, Anthony in Galbraith County who stated that he is comfortable with being a coach and he enjoys coaching, but doesn't feel that he has the skills to coach, "Just to be very direct, I don’t feel like I got a lot of knowledge or information or training on coaching in that two day." Then later when discussing the coaching skills, he expressed the following about the observations and scoring, “I understand that’s the very basis of being able to do the rest of it, but I think that’s obnoxious and insulting. You asked me to be candid.” Finally, three front-line supervisors expressed that they were not comfortable being a coach. All three of these supervisors came from Eliot County. I explore this further in Eliot County's themes.

More important than the number of supervisors who felt comfortable with coaching are the reasons associated with their comfort level. The supervisors' hesitation begins to reveal some larger truths about what it means to be a front-line supervisor. One thing is evident - those front-line supervisors with coaches' training experience find it acceptable, while those supervisors no prior coaches' training (as is the case for most probation front-line supervisors) feel conflicted about coaching practices. This lack of comfort seems to reflect what Kadushin and Harkness refer to as the "problems and stresses in becoming and being a supervisor" (2014, pgs. 206 - 245). The hesitancy in expressing comfort with coaching was related to changes in self-perception and identify, which is a known stressor in being a front-line supervisor in social work. Both new and
veteran supervisors across all four sites evidenced this struggle. It is a lack of comfort that stems from trying to grapple with a new role. For newer supervisors this might entail navigating changes in peer relationships. For veteran supervisors it is a change in identity when going from a role defined almost exclusively by administrative duties to a role that includes explicit educative duties focused on developing officer competency. Both new and veteran supervisors might be subject to feelings of inadequacy related to not knowing the answer. They no longer have the "sanctioned luxury of acceptable dependence" on a supervisor (Kadushin and Harkness, 2014: pg. 219). This in turn fuels their perception that they must have the answer. Supervisors credited their lack of comfort to not understanding the skills they would coach on, not wanting to appear to be micromanaging, and lack of comfort giving feedback. The findings on supervisors' perceptions of feedback are particularly interesting and provide a more concrete illustration of this equivocation.

4.1.1 Role conflict in action: the problem with feedback

Supervisor hesitancy and anxiety with coaching was most evident by the way in which they conceived feedback. Supervisors simultaneously desire to improve their ability to give feedback while also acknowledging a hesitancy with giving feedback. When asked about their supervisory style, overwhelmingly supervisors feared the label of "micro-manager". They viewed supporting staff and improving morale as key responsibilities. Thus, many any supervisors felt uncomfortable giving what they termed "negative" feedback, as they feared it would interfere with their supportive function. This
was particularly evident in new supervisors or supervisors who felt they had less experience than the officers they oversaw.

"...because it might be the same people I have known for a long time, but when you’re a supervisor giving feedback, it appears critical. You know what I mean? Because you’re the supervisor, so that’s the hard part where you’re like, “Oh, I don’t wanna offend,” but then you’re like, “Wait a minute. My job is to give this kind of feedback,” so I think that’s why that’s hard, so just my experience in the position, experience being a coach, that’s the portion as far as knowing the skills."

-Antonia (Tiptree County)

But even more seasoned supervisors expressed this hesitancy. The idea that officers have their own styles and that it is the supervisor’s job to understand those styles rather than change anything about them comes up often during in-person trainings, and it emerged in the interviews as well. This belief is often tied with the idea that supervisors do not want to be seen as micromanaging or domineering. Again, there is a worry that feedback might interfere with their supportive functions.

"Everybody has a different style that they have and part of mine is making sure that they all feel like this is a good place to come to work. That they’re valued. They are wanted. That their opinions matter. I think that it’s important to me as a supervisor that they all have different styles and they don’t need to change their style I need to adapt to them. You can let
people do different things as long as they get to the same page. They get there differently."

-Bryan (Tiptree County)

Despite the evident hesitancy with giving feedback, there was a concomitant, and perhaps stronger, desire to improve the use of feedback and the belief that feedback was important for improving practice. Twenty-one out of twenty-two respondents noted the importance of being able to give valuable feedback and expressed a desire to improve their use of feedback.

"I would like to be able to increase, be able to give the feedback, both positive and negative and be able to come up with a like, “You did this great, but you could do it better, and this is how you could do so.”

-Aimee (Tiptree County)

Supervisors conceptualized providing feedback on areas for improvement as providing "negative feedback" and positive feedback as "praise." For example, Keiron at Eliot County stated, "I don't know if there's more training for it, but I'm not great at providing negative feedback." He then went on to describe his view of “negative feedback" in stark terms including telling an officer they had a "shitty interview" and saying to the officer, "...here's the 20 things you really did wrong." While one of the starker examples, this exemplifies a common finding with supervisors' inability to conceptualize constructive feedback in a positive or helpful way.
One might expect equivocation when asking an individual about their perspective on starting a new practice they feel unsure about. What is more revealing are the ways supervisors believe coaching, and particularly the use of feedback, may help or hinder their managerial practice and their relationships with their officers. So, the question is, do front-line supervisors believe coaching is appropriate for the position? Perhaps they like the idea of coaching, but when asked to consider whether it was a good fit for their particular role in their particular agency, they feel differently. The findings related to appropriateness provide both promise for the future of coaching by front-line supervisors but further evidence of the disconnect between what front-line supervision should be and what front-line supervision is.

4.2 Appropriateness

4.2.1 The relevance of coaching and some red flags

Questions related to appropriateness tap into several domains including the degree to which respondents believe that coaching meets a specific need. In other words, how relevant or useful is coaching to the agency? Except for two Eliot County supervisors, all participants identified a need that coaching met and most discussed how it met that need. The needs identified tended to fall under the three categories of a supervisor’s duties identified by Kadushin and Harkness (2014). Figure 7 provides an overview of the needs identified and their relationship to each other. The arrows indicate how the needs relate to each other. For example, there was an implication that improving officer accountability
would improve officer skills. That is denoted by an arrow from the need to improve officer accountability to the need to improve officer use of skills.

Figure 7: Supervisor-Identified Needs for Coaching

Nine respondents identified *administrative needs* such as the need to improve accountability. At times supervisors referred to officer accountability but other times they referred to supervisor accountability (this was particularly true with those participants who oversaw other supervisors). When participants noted that coaching improves accountability, they are referring to the need to complete and record observations. The idea is that observations keep officers accountable for using the skills by virtue of having
someone watch to ensure they are using them, and observations keep supervisors accountable to their educative function because it’s a report that they must turn in showing that they have completed an observation. Many respondents mentioned fidelity as a need that coaching could help them meet. In many cases fidelity may be part of an educative process; however, it becomes administrative when supervisors describe it as “ensuring fidelity” or “monitoring fidelity” rather than “improving fidelity.” Without educative processes such as feedback, questioning, or training, "ensuring fidelity" becomes more about checking on whether officers are doing what they are supposed to be doing. It is backward looking, rather than forward looking. It is about ensuring adherence to a standard rather than helping someone meet a standard. It is baked into an assumption that supervision agencies often implicitly embody - that watching someone is enough to change behavior. One supervisor noted this concern when discussing the agency's expectations of supervisors:

"we're supposed to observe...but that's really more a quality assurance type of thing to make sure that they're conducting assessments accurately, so it doesn't really get to the what I think is more important aspects of what we do...
I mean it's really mostly like a checklist type of thing, 'have you done the 3 observations?' much more than how purposeful they are, how they relate to the bigger picture of the push for integrating the EPICS skills and stuff. It's really more about did you do them."

-Rachel (Tiptree County)
While this clear-eyed perspective differentiates between administrative and educative functions, more often there was an implication that improving accountability or ensuring fidelity would improve either officers' use of skills or their decision-making process. This was also tied to improving probationer change. Supervisors often referred to coaching as a *mechanism, a system of formalized checks and balances, a framework, or a structure* to help achieve these goals.

"With SUSTAIN when we’re having to upload coaching documents, there’s an accountability factor. That’s a challenge. [Supervisors] can’t say, “Oh, yeah, I’m doing that,” and just pay it lip service. They actually have to do this."

-Gracie (Tiptree County)

Accountability and fidelity are not ends in and of themselves, they are meant to improve larger goals. The implication was that by improving these things, the officers would be more likely to improve their use of skills and this in turn would improve probationer outcomes. Because despite her belief that observations were being used more as a checkbox than for development of skills, Rachel in Tiptree County still advocated for the need of coaching to ensure fidelity as it relates to improving skills because not only does it ensure skills are done in a way that is effective it also ensures that these skills do not "falls by the wayside because nobody’s really having any discussion."

Three respondents mentioned the link between improving probationer behavior and a reduction in administrative duties so that relationship is marked with a dotted line.
Eleven respondents noted *educative needs* that coaching could meet. This was outside of mentioning fidelity. These needs included helping officers "*hone their techniques,*" as Jason in Galbraith County noted, and develop more nuanced perspectives "*not so much of the black and white,*" as Aimee in Tiptree County put it. It would also help officers incorporate skills into their contacts with probationers, because as Rhiannon in Tiptree County notes, without follow-up coaching "*Applying [the training] will be the furthest thing from their minds.*"

Respondents mentioned several mechanisms by which this educative process happened. These included keeping things relevant. For example, Rhiannon in Tiptree County stated that coaches can "*keep those things fresh*". Also, reinforcing what officers learn in training by talking about it, and, providing feedback. Many respondents echoed coaching elements covered in the training, for example, making the transition from focusing on mistakes to focusing on improvement.

"*Just supervisors coaching them up you know working with them on a daily basis versus what we were doing before and just correcting mistakes you know it's better that we give them direction on how to improve their supervision of offenders versus just finding the mistakes that they do.*"

-Zach (Hooks County)

Or, in the vein of Donald Schon's conception of reflection-on-action, helping officers think more critically. Acting as "*another brain*".

"*I think that that’s why coaching is going to be very useful to my officers, so that I can say, “Hey, have you thought of this? When the guy said that,*"
what did you think that meant? I just think it would’ve been helpful if you directed him in this way.’ I think that sometimes you’re just too close to it.”

- Vincent (Tiptree County)

One respondent illuminated a core tenet of David Kolb's experiential learning theory, the importance turning experience into knowledge.

"A lot of times when we do training, we do role play, we’re gentle on each other because we’re learning, but in the real world the people that we supervise are not necessarily always gentle. [Probationers] don’t always fit in what the pathway that we think they’re going to go. You need to learn to adapt and you need to learn to help keep them focused in what you’re trying to do with them. I think observing them and then having the feedback sessions to discuss it will be the best method of implementing it. Well, at least so that they can learn from their interaction and hopefully continue to improve."

-Albert (Tiptree County)

And finally, some respondents mentioned needs related to a supervisor's 

**supportive function.** These include improving collaboration with officers, improving comradery, and thus improving officers' motivation or buy-in, which in turn would likely improve officer's use of skills. Like Adrian in Hooks County who noted, "I will have a better understanding at least of the individuals that I coach." because it "Just kind of get me out of my office and make me make me work closely with [the officers]."
The mechanism by which coaching would improve supervisors' supportive function is by creating the sense that the officer and the supervisor were "in it together." This is turn would lower officers' defenses about having another person in the room with them or having to have a possibly uncomfortable conversation as Rhiannon in Tiptree County said, "I think it will help their defenses go down. I'm not questioning what they've done as an officer." It will also help improve officer buy in, as noted by Tiffany in Tiptree County, "I think that if we are in the middle with them, then there is no—the officer's gonna say, 'Why am I doing this!'"

That all but two supervisors felt there was a need for coaching is encouraging, however, the use of coaching for administrative needs is concerning. In person observations of officer contacts should not be couched as an accountability mechanism, as that is incompatible with a safe learning environment. The findings on the compatibility and suitability of coaching for the role of front-line supervisors does provide more promise for the future of coaching by front-line supervisors.

4.2.2 The promise of compatibility and suitability

Feeling that coaching meets a need is one component of appropriateness. The other is the perception of how well coaching fits with a supervisor's role in a particular agency. Excepting Eliot County, respondents overwhelmingly felt that coaching was a suitable endeavor for front-line supervisors and compatible with either their current responsibilities or the direction the organization is going. When asked who should have “primary” responsibility for developing the skills of front-line staff, nine respondents said front-line supervisor. Of those who said someone other than front-line supervisors the
answers included the top leadership (e.g., Dept. Director, Div. Director), supervisors in charge of training, the training department, peers, and the academy. However (except for Eliot County) all other respondents indicated that coaching was compatible to their role as a front-line supervisor.

“I think it’s got to be a supervisor. I think, regardless of the base someone gets at entry-level training, when they come out to when the rubber meets the road, it’s their direct supervisor that’s guiding them and helping them figure out which way they’re going. That’s a tough one because they are so often going to turn to their peers, but where the responsibility lies, I would say it’s their direct supervisor.”

- Rhiannon (Tiptree County)

And many were able to give specific examples of their current managerial practices that closely align with coaching, such as providing feedback, teaching, role playing, or sending out videos, and case staffings.

I also asked supervisors about their current top three duties. Specifically, what the agency expected them to get done. Not surprisingly supervisors included several administrative duties, such as paperwork, policy compliance, accountability, and performance monitoring, but more surprisingly supervisors also included many educative duties and supportive duties. Table 6 lists the responsibilities identified by the supervisors. Examples of those responsibilities that supervisors listed that fall within the educative function included staff development, training, advising, improve, decision-making, observing, coaching, risk-reduction, providing feedback, and teaching.
Supportive functions listed by supervisors included being present, supporting officers, fostering teamwork and team unity, building morale, and building relationships with their officers. So, by virtue of their existing duties, front-line supervisors already encompass various roles.

Table 6: Current Top Supervisor Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Identified Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Policy Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentence reports (Accuracy, Timeliness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paperwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timecards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure swift violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educatve</td>
<td>Staff Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve Decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk-reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote EBPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Being present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build Morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Team Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Build relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents in three of the four sites noted that coaching is "where the agency is going." This was also a theme in three of the four in-person trainings.
"I was just in a training last week emergent senior leadership and that's what everything is going to is coaching. That's the way of addressing the employees now is to coach them up to do a better job. So, I think it can be extremely beneficial. I'm kind of glad we're doing it what kind of up there you know leading the way actually."

-Adrian (Hooks County)

The idea that the agency was looking for a way to shift from bean counting to being able to qualitatively assess and improve officer performance.

"When I started as a sup I was the machine that was there to approve the warrants, staff the warrants, do just very administrative. Then, as they left, and certainly in this position, it’s so much more guiding, coaching, mentoring, looking through a different lens."

-Gracie (Tiptree County)

This echoes what I often hear at in-person trainings. That agencies are searching for ways to improve officer practices and also "ensure accountability" to those practices through some sort of qualitative assessment.

4.2.3 Gap between expression of suitability and suitability in practice

Despite respondents agreeing that coaching is appropriate for front-line supervisors, there was evidence that supervisors still view coaching as separate from their supervisor duties. Speaking of coaching as something being added to their current duties, or casting coaching as separate from manager duties, indicates that supervisor duties are thought to be primarily administrative, rather than both administrative and educative. As
Jessie in Tiptree County noted, "It's a balancing act between being a manager and a leader." Supervisors rightly viewed coaching as separate from administrative duties such as performance evaluations, but clearly prioritized those administrative duties as their primary function. Despite supervisors expressing the importance of coaching within existing supervisory role, it is evident that organizations define whether explicitly or implicitly the role of a supervisor more so by administrative duties.

"I almost view coaching as kind of separate from the leadership/management piece because you want to be able to help people, give them feedback on what they’re doing without them feeling like they’re going to be reading about it in an eval because I’m their supervisor."

- Albert (Tiptree County)

So, supervisors see a need for coaching, although this need can at times wade into administrative functions. This is concerning considering the primacy that administrative functions seem to have in the day-to-day activities of the supervisors. The findings in feasibility reinforce this noted disconnect between how supervisors perceive the compatibility and suitability of coaching practices with their current supervisory responsibilities and what supervision actually looks like in practice. This is particularly apparent when the supervisors discuss their lack of time to coach.

4.3 Feasibility

While the interview guide specifically asked about feasibility, the supervisors broached feasibility issues throughout the interview. Respondents identified the following
feasibility issues: time, officer attributes, coach attributes, organizational practices, leadership practices, logistics, program attributes, and seeing the results or benefits.

Figure 8 shows how many supervisors mentioned each category. Nearly all (n=20) mentioned time as a factor likely to affect their ability to coach their officers. Half (n=11) mentioned officer traits. Slightly less than half (n=10) mentioned coach traits and organizational practices. Several supervisors (n=9) mentioned leadership and logistics. While no one directly responded with ways that the SUSTAIN coaching model could improve to make it more likely that they coach their officers, several (n=8) brought up issues about the model that could weaken feasibility. And finally, seven supervisors thought that seeing the benefit of their coaching efforts would make it more likely that they coach their officers.

Figure 8: Feasibilities Issues Identified by Coaches
4.3.1 Time

Nearly all respondents mentioned time as a barrier to being able to coach officers. More specifically, respondents mentioned administrative duties, unexpected duties, too many officers, and time it takes to get comfortable with coaching practices as potential barriers to them coaching regularly. Administrative duties included paperwork and work review while unexpected duties might include "putting out fires" or unscheduled meetings. Again, even though most respondents included educative functions in their list of their current top responsibilities, the notion that coaching is separate from "supervisor duties" came up when discussing the lack of time. For example, when asked about her top current responsibilities Gracie in Tiptree County responded,

"I think mainly like as an advisor to the officers as that go-between of helping them come up with their decisions as far as how their gonna supervise an offender."

-Gracie (Tiptree County)

And yet, when asked what would make it more or less likely that she coaches her officers she responded:

"It can get busy as far as reviewing reports and other assignments and going with the day to day stuff that our supervisors have to, like our supervisor duties and stuff, being the biggest obstacle."

-Gracie (Tiptree County)
The notion that “supervisor duties” get in the way of coaching reinforces the finding that while supervisors often include educative functions in their key responsibilities, these educative duties are still outside the scope of traditional supervisor duties. Supervisors raised the concern of having to perform their duties with too many officers. I would categorize Rachel in Tiptree County as a champion of coaching, and yet, she describes feeling like she cannot breathe and feeling herself being "dragged under" as her number of officers rose from eight to nine and eventually to twelve.

"My personal opinion is that 10 is too many. You don't have the ability to dig deep with 10 people under your supervision...I had 8 officers for a bit, and it's felt just so different like I could just feel like I could breathe. I was busy and I was filling up my time and there wasn't any room for shenanigans or anything like that but I was I just felt like I can manage it and then I think when I got to nine I felt myself being dragged under a little bit and then at one point I had 12 and that was just absolutely you can't manage it...I was consistently falling behind."

-Rachel (Tiptree County)

Rhiannon in Tiptree County is another participant I would describe as a champion of coaching. While talking about time constraints she responded with a laugh that what she really needed was time management training. While Rhiannon said it as an aside, I believe that she hit on a crucial reality and one that training programs and agencies often ignore. Change efforts must consider the totality of
supervisor duties, along with what they prioritize, and why. Supervisors in all four sites noted the notion of "piling on" and "never taking anything away".

“The courageous conversation would be when supervisors say like myself, I'm at 300 hours of time that is not paid. 300 hours of my time isn't paid currently that I donate to the job into this organization. You have to have a response that's better than, ‘Thanks for that. I got another 100 hours for you to add on top of that.’ 'Cause bluntly, it just feels like a fuck you.”
– Kieron (Eliot County)

The evident feeling that supervisors do not have time to coach officers raises the obvious question - what do supervisors spend their time doing? The answer seems to be a heavy dose of administrative duties while balancing their supportive function and educative duties in an ad hoc fashion.

4.3.2 Officer and coach attributes

The next two most oft-cited feasibility issues were officer traits and supervisor traits. In Supervision and Social Work, Kadushin and Harkness noted that supervisors in social work are aware of and feel concerned about, the limits of the help they can give supervisees. That was evident from the interviews with front-line probation officers have the same concerns. They are aware of and concerned about the limits of help they can give officers. During in-person trainings officer attributes often arise during role plays and discussions. Supervisors categorize officers as "difficult" due to their supervision style, their unwillingness to change, or sometimes their obliviousness to a particularly grating trait, such as neediness. During the interviews, eleven supervisors identified
officer attributes as a potential barrier to coaching. Table 7 displays the in vivo coding related to this theme. It shows the various ways that coaches conceptualize officer resistance, from personality to the impact of organizational cultural.

Table 7: In Vivo Coding of Officer Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>In Vivo Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adrian (Hooks County)</td>
<td>&quot;problem children&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline (Hooks County)</td>
<td>&quot;resistant to this based on their intrinsic personality&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanie (Hooks County)</td>
<td>&quot;it’s training the ones that have been here forever&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimee (Tiptree County)</td>
<td>&quot;not a counselor&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gracie (Tiptree County)</td>
<td>&quot;set in their ways&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;you’re not gonna teach me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany (Tiptree County)</td>
<td>&quot;officers do not like change&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;talk different when the supervisor’s in the room&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincent (Tiptree County)</td>
<td>&quot;almost a cost-benefit analysis&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;attitude&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;It’s difficult to give those dogs new tricks&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;going to feel like they’re lesser officers&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;if it’s not broke, why fix it&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhiannon (Tiptree County)</td>
<td>&quot;Just coming off of a big push for our risk reduction training&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;cultural thing&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;highly diluted with officers not going through it.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;won’t think that they have the time to do this&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin (Eliot County)</td>
<td>&quot;pushed to the back burner&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray (Eliot County)</td>
<td>&quot;everyone has a ceiling&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;can't make chicken salad out of chicken shit.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;they're not happy here&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                             | "They’re very law enforcement, military, right wing kind of absolute people."
| Kieron (Eliot County)       | "barely have time to enter your case notes "                                 |
|                             | "people have a default to comfort, and a default to ease,"                   |
|                             | "opinion of themselves that they're good enough at their job to get that compliance" |
In reviewing supervisors' conceptions of officer responses to their coaching efforts, one can understand the anxiety evidenced when discussing comfort with coaching. Kadushin and Harkness (2014) note problem supervisee's (officers in this case) as one of the problems and stressors of being a supervisor. In particular, supervisees who tended to be uncooperative, overly dependent, hostile, resistive, or failed to meet expectations tax supervisors' patience (pg. 220). As agencies identify supervisors with their officers, any complaints about officers' work reflect negatively on the supervisor. The respondents evidenced anxiety of the possible resistance they would encounter when attempting to coach officers. Relatedly, respondents noted supervisors' comfort level, buy-in, and style as feasibility issues. Along with discomfort providing feedback, supervisors noted their lack of comfort with actual skills on which they would be coaching officers. One respondent said the following about his training to be an EPICS-II coach, though one could make the presumption that he was being polite in not directing this toward his assessment of SUSTAIN:

“We’re brand new in this and yet you’re expecting me to listen to an officer do something, but I don’t even know what I’m really supposed to be looking for because our training was super minimal but because we’re sups, we’re supposed to know."

-Bryan (Tiptree County)

Supervisor buy-in was another potential feasibility issue. Apart from one Eliot County respondent, no one explicitly stated that they themselves did not buy into the idea
of coaching, but noted that others might not be bought in. That they might not see the benefit of coaching.

"...maybe they’re more the mentality of, 'I’m here to grade papers and do annual reviews and maybe a little bit of help with staffing and stuff,'...When you have a unit of ten officers that are underneath them, they could potentially have a big impact on how this goes out."

-Albert (Tiptree County)

Some respondents also noted supervisor "style" as a feasibility issue. Keiron in Eliot County spoke of hostile supervisors known to exact retribution on officers such as going over their caseloads with a "fine-tooth comb." While several respondents noted the opposite issue wherein the supervisor does not feel that they can "be critical with people," as Antonia at Tiptree County stated.

4.3.3 Organizational practices, leadership, logistics, and seeing results

Ten respondents mentioned various organizational practices they felt precluded the ability to coach. These included staff turnover (n=4), EBP overload (n=3), hiring practices (n=2), lack of initial officer training (n=2), and lack of process measures to support coaching (n=2). Importantly, in Tiptree County two supervisors also mentioned that their current in-house EPICS coach, a position dedicated solely to improving the use of EPICS, was crucial to ensuring the success of SUSTAIN coaching.

Nine respondents spoke about several ways in which leadership was affecting or could affect the feasibility of continuing with the coaching. These included leadership showing a lack of support for the effort, showing a lack of commitment to maintaining
the effort, and not providing implementation guidance. Gracie in Tiptree County noted, "If the director doesn’t place value on it, how does the line supervisor? If the line supervisor doesn’t place value in it, how does the staff?" Similarly, supervisors in both Galbraith County and Eliot County noted a lack of leadership support, commitment, and guidance.

“I don’t know if this goes there, but we have heard nothing to this point about rollout. We just have no idea how this is gonna be rolled out, implemented, facilitated. From a top of the department down, how are we gonna fundamentally be able to make this happen?"

- Anthony (Galbraith County)

Across sites there seemed to be a lack of leadership involvement. Only Tiptree County had existing in-house supports for coaching and those roles pre-dated SUSTAIN. While they have the supports, the two individuals in those roles do not have explicit instruction on exactly how to support SUSTAIN. The other three had no plans for in-house supports for coaching (e.g., having an internal coaches’ mentor). Leadership had not provided detailed plans to staff on what the expectations would be for when and how supervisors would go about coaching. And the lack of leadership involvement seemed to indicate that they either did not support the project or were not invested in it enough to get involved.

Supervisors also noted several important logistical issues. These included physical barriers such as working in a different building than the officers they supervise, and different shifts. But, perhaps most importantly, one supervisor explained that officers met
clients in a large open room and there were generally many office contacts happening in the room simultaneously. While more supervisors did not mention this, it is likely the case for many other officers both at Tiptree County and at other agencies. The supervisor noted that the building she referenced held about 100 officers. This lack of privacy makes it hard if not impossible to adhere to evidenced-informed practices. As Rhiannon in Tiptree County noted, "Communicating with your client in a genuine and earnest way is not—it kind of goes out the door." These logistical issues, while outside of the scope of anyone training program, should be recognized as a real concern for implementing human service practices within a probation setting.

And finally, many respondents noted the importance of seeing results or benefits for both coaches’ motivation to continue coaching and officer motivation to continue the skills. Vincent in Tiptree County noted the need of the department to "market" SUSTAIN to the officers, so that the officers do not "have the expectation that it’s drudgery, something that they have to do." He notes:

"I think that probably marketing it and also being transparent, allowing the officers to see how things are changing as a result of using—and I think that if we can say, “Here is where we were. Here is where we are now, because we’ve been using coaching,” I think will really open up a lot of eyes."

-Vincent (Tiptree County)

Along the lines of seeing the benefit, an important point bubbled up when two respondents mentioned the unpredictable nature of the individuals on their
caseloads (juveniles and DV) and a couple of people pointed out the low revocation rates the agency already has “if it’s not broke, why fix it?”

4.3.4 SUSTAIN program attributes: weak implementation plan, training shortcomings, and the perils of skill rating

The interviews had implications for the SUSTAIN model as well. Respondents noted, either directly or indirectly, several attributes of the model that might be improved. This included a weak implementation plan. While supervisors mostly put the responsibility of an implementation plan on agency leadership, the SUSTAIN model must bear some responsibility as well. As noted by Roman in Galbraith County:

"[It] would be good to have that short, sweet implementation plan piece because [the supervisors] are a little more rigid, as far as timeframes and those types of things..."

-Roman (Galbraith County)

He went on to note that supervisors, "like things very laid out like, 'We’re gonna do this. It’s gonna take 15 minutes. This is exactly how you do it,' type of thing." Again, while most supervisors noted implementation planning as a responsibility of leadership, this finding provides an important insight to SUSTAIN program developers and considerations for how the SUSTAIN program might take a more active role in implementation planning with agencies.

A few respondents also directly addressed the training they would receive indicating that they did not believe it would properly prepare them to be a coach. While Ray in Eliot County was one of the more pessimistic on the topic of supervisors coaching
in general, he brings up an important weakness to the supervisors' training - the lack of ongoing individual feedback based on direct observation.

"I don't wanna coach it because I don't know— I'm not good at it and so, I guess I'm just not comfortable. For me, I'd have to invest myself another six months, maybe even nine months and then from there, I would request someone like yourself or someone that’s proficient in it to come down and watch me observe and watch me coach and give me immediate feedback for maybe 90 days and then I think I’d feel comfortable doing that. But that’s just a high standard."

-Ray (Eliot County)

Watching the supervisors provide feedback to the officers then providing feedback to the supervisors would indeed be best practice. This comment, though only voiced by one supervisor, brings to light a crucial weakness in the SUSTAIN coaches' training. There is no mechanism for individual feedback based on observation of supervisors performing coaching beyond the initial two-day training. Follow-up group booster sessions rely on supervisors' secondhand reports.

Bryan in Tiptree County tapped into another crucial shortcoming with the SUSTAIN coaches' training though he did so in reference to his experience with EPICS-II training. His statement touches on both the lack of supervisor preparation to coach and on the short comings in ensuring interrater reliability when attempting to score an officer's uses of skills. As part of his training to be an
EPICS-II coach, he asked that supervisors get copies of good interviews and bad interviews because he questioned the ability for all supervisors to get on the "same page" with whether an interview was good or bad, noting:

"...when we were talking in the group form, we would be like yeah, I thought this was a good one and our trainer would listen to it and it was like ‘no this was terrible.’ And it’s like well here you go, I thought it was good, you thought it was bad. How do we get to the point where we’re all on the same page?"

-Bryan (Tiptree County)

Bryan gets to the heart of an issue with training practitioners to score a set of skills. Training busy practitioners to score skills and achieve a high rate of interrater reliability is a tall order. Keiron in Eliot County noted this challenge as well, though it was in terms of his training as a motivational interviewing (MI) trainer. Keiron characterized himself as an "expert in MI", with ten years of experience with using and training on MI he received feedback at a recent training on MI that he needed to work on his facilitation skills, and he was not granted facilitator status.

"I was just like, 'Oh, really?'...we were not granted facilitator status, we are granted co-facilitator status, and she and I both worked at juvenile and had been teaching MI since 2009, so like a decade. We're like, 'Okay, I don't know what your criteria is, but okay.'"

-Keiron (Eliot County)
The realistic limits to achieving interrater reliability in scoring officer's use of skills further bolsters another finding which is the anxiety surrounding the observation rating form that supervisors are expected to use in their observation of officer contacts. Overwhelmingly, respondents spoke of the importance of observing staff and providing feedback, but no respondent mentioned the need to rate an officer's use of skills. And while only two respondents directly addressed the observation rate sheet, these two illustrate a prevalent sentiment, as evidenced by my in-person training experience with twenty-three different counties or municipalities. Aimee in Tiptree County noted, "The observation form itself and having to score people is a big barrier." And later added, "I haven't seen our staff be receptive to that." Anthony in Galbraith County called the rating sheet "obnoxious and insulting". All of this is important feedback to the SUSTAIN training model and something for SUSTAIN training developers to consider.

**4.3.5 Managing/Coping strategies**

Supervisors evidenced obvious anxiety about coaching their staff. However, without prompting, supervisors also noted several coping strategies they either currently use or plan to use to help overcome some of the feasibility issues. These included strategies for improving staff buy-in, various time management practices, and in one case passive resistance. Several supervisors noted ways in which they planned to improve staff buy, like this strengths-based approach:

"Even though I might be telling them okay next time try it this way, I’m always approaching it in a manner where I’m building
them up. I don’t find it doesn’t benefit anybody to, in a training aspect, it doesn’t benefit anybody to come down on anybody. I think everything can be a training moment. Everyone can always learn a new way to do something. And I’m going to try to use that to help my staff be as good as they can be."

- Jason (Galbraith County)

To combat the fear associated with having your supervisor watch you at your job, several noted that they would frame it as "we're in it together"

"I think one, the way that I approach it, I’ll probably frame it with staff that I’m learning the skill as well, so I’ll need feedback from you guys as well, so that it’s not like I just come in and dominate the process."

- Roman (Galbraith County)

Five supervisors noted specific time-management strategies they were thinking about ranging from how they plan on scheduling coaching sessions to how they might change the way unit meetings look. Here again, supervisors evidenced ambiguity. Rhiannon in Tiptree County both spoke of the need for time management training while in the same interview talking confidently about her ability to manage her time differently.

"In my opinion, I’m not adding time...I’ll be changing conversations that we’re having into these different conversations regarding this information and then continuing to focus on my observations and feedback
incorporating the things that we, all of us, have gone through or be going through."

-Rhiannon (Tiptree County)

The strategies uncovered through the course of the interview offer a glimpse into how supervisors think about and manage the demands put upon them. Future research should study this phenomenon more directly.

4.4 Acknowledging ambiguity

In their handbook for qualitative research, Miles, Huberman & Saldano (2020) note this about qualitative data, "like the phenomena they mirror, they are usually complex, ambiguous, and sometimes downright contradictory" (pg. 477). While this summary of results presents an organized story of how supervisors perceive coaching, it would be remiss to not acknowledge the ambiguity that is natural to any change process and was evident in these interviews as well. The motivational interviewing literature most often describes ambiguity as holding opposing viewpoints simultaneously. For example, both wanting and not wanting to quit smoking. It is considered a normal phase when a person is thinking of making a change. Respondents often appeared to be of two minds about the process of coaching. For example, many supervisors expressed that they were both comfortable and not comfortable with being a coach. Often, they would oscillate between these two poles as they spoke about ways, they were comfortable and then other ways in which they were not. Overwhelmingly supervisors noted the importance of observing officers, but simultaneously noted that officers act differently around supervisors. Supervisors also both want leadership to tell them exactly what to do, but
also do not necessarily believe leadership can produce the best plan. They want a structured way to ensure fidelity, but they do not want to use observation rating sheets. A few times respondents mentioned the need for consistency across supervisors but decried the loss of discretion. Ray in Eliot County provides a stark display of ambivalence when he noted incredulously that their agency did not have a supervisor manual, which he characterized as "kind of odd." Then, he made it clear that he did not want a manual before noting that the lack of a manual probably does lead to inconsistencies. And then ended with, "I guess not much can change because you don't have any structure to change." In part this ambiguity is what the concepts of acceptability, appropriateness and feasibility attempt to parse out. It acknowledges that a person may feel comfortable with certain practices, may find the practices acceptable and credible, but still feel that they aren't appropriate for a particular job or a particular organization.

4.5 Site-specific themes

Each site evidenced its own story and personality. Whether to call it culture, climate, or some other conceptual frame is outside the scope of this work, but the differences do present an interesting insight into the micro-forces at play within individual organizations and caution against applying findings at one agency to other agencies.

4.5.1 Galbraith County: Commitment

Galbraith County participants expressed minimal interest in the SUSTAIN project as evidenced by no supervisors attending the first webinar, and only two attending the second kick-off webinar. None of the participants had completed the eLearning
requirements before the in-person training. The apathy might be attributed to perception that leadership did not support the project. This was a theme in two of the three interviews.

“I guess if we’re gonna do it, the department’s gonna have to commit to this being a thing, and not six months later find a new shiny toy that we smash on top of this one and kind of ignore this shiny toy now that it’s not quite as shiny anymore.”

- *Anthony (Galbraith County)*

Galbraith County, as evidenced by the organizational survey results, and their history of trainings is well positioned to implement coaching on a regular basis. No respondents raised officer attributes or coach attributes as potential barriers. The lack of involvement leadership involvement; however, signaled to the supervisors the importance, or lack of importance, of the SUSTAIN project.

To date, Galbraith County has completed four of their five booster sessions. Despite professed interest in implementing coaching, none of the supervisors have turned in their assignments for any booster session. Although the discussions reveal that at least two coaches do complete each assignment.

### 4.5.2 Hooks County: The best of intentions

More so than any other site, Hooks County participants expressed interest in implementing coaching and in having the officers go through the eLearning. Throughout the in-person training the supervisors continuously spoke about how to integrate what they were learning into their everyday managerial practice. The group were all good
friends and had personal relationships outside of the agency. There was a lot of cohesion among the Hooks County supervisors as evidenced by their group problem solving of several issues including restructuring officer caseloads, teaming up for coaching, and planning for implementation. Unfortunately, Hooks County encountered what they termed "unprecedented" turnover.

“We’ve worked a couple different plans out to get SUSTAIN implemented and then once somebody quits it kind of sets us back a little bit and we have to restructure.”

-Zach (Hooks County)

Hooks County remained in perpetual planning mode. They have not moved forward since the coaches training in February 2019.

4.5.3 Tiptree County: Don't let the green grass fool you

Of all the sites, Tiptree County had the most experience with coaching. They currently complete three annual observations and their supervisors attend a six-month leadership academy that includes many elements of coaching discussed at the training. For example, they had all been through a Crucial Conversations training. Some of the managers are also EPICS trained while others are trained in Mark Carey's Risk Reduction program. Despite their long history with promising practices, leadership's support for the rehabilitative and EBP philosophy, and their robust training system, respondents still felt there was a lack of specifics about how things should and could be done.
“I know we’re that forefront of the probation department world. I think we’re there, it’s just again, it comes down to that time of how do we do this and how do we implement it?”

-Tiffany (Tiptree County)

Despite being a large county, Tiptree County completed the eLearning as scheduled and moved to the next phase of the project - the coaching booster sessions. The coaches are currently completing their first assignment which will hopefully help inform future implementation efforts.

4.5.4 Eliot County: Suspicious minds

The three interviews in Eliot County evidenced greater apparent cynicism over the agency's ability to change as compared to the other three sites. The interviews were longer than other sites ranging from 44 minutes to nearly an hour and a half. Over the course of each interview the Eliot County respondents focused heavily on feasibility problems. It was difficult to parse out acceptability or appropriateness in these three interviews as nearly every sentence related to those concepts was immediately followed by a feasibility issue. For example, when asked whether SUSTAIN fit a need, Martin replied, "I think so, but we also have to have supervisors who are proficient in the skills, and they’re not." And Ray said, "Well, it would fit a need, but we have other needs that need to be met to make it effective."

The problems in Eliot County appear more entrenched than the other three sites. They were facing turnover of their entire leadership team. The interviews were colorful with respondents expressing themselves in stark, sometimes jarring metaphors. For
example, when discussing the best way to develop the skills of front-line officers, Ray offered up his opinion on staff by comparing them to Hondas when evidence-informed practices require a BMW and stating, "...you can't make a chicken salad out of chicken shit." Unlike other sites, which had a "this is the direction we are heading" theme, Eliot County saw itself as decidedly behind the times.

“Our department is definitely really far behind as far as following the modern trend of what you should be as a supervisor and how you should treat staff.”

-Ray (Eliot County)

Respondents in all three interviews mentioned case load sizes, leadership turnover, hiring practices, and various other organizational issues. Martin specifically mentioned apathy, which he saw as being related to pay and caseload sizes. Keiron spoke about hiring choices noting that the upcoming changes in leadership would signal to him what the chief believes. If the agency promoted "old school POs" it would signal that the agency is not invested in evidence-informed practices such as SUSTAIN and coaching.

Ray illustrated Eliot County’s cynicism by calling into question the credibility of the SUSTAIN project and setting an impossible standard of scientific rigor before the practices would be deemed credible for their county.

“I’d love to see like the research and compare different probation departments so I can see let’s say you did, I don't know, 100 probation departments and if we could find some with the likenesses to us to see if they had time, if it was effective. We can't compare our self to like the
feds. They have caseloads of 40 people. We can't compare our self to that.

We can't compare our self to [another agency] 'cause they don't do their
own field arrests. They don't do the fieldwork we do. They don't do most
of the stuff we do. We’d have to have a department similar to ours to see if
it’s effective before really investing ourselves in it.”

-Ray (Eliot County)

Despite the cynicism, Eliot County has nearly completed the eLearning and
should be ready for their first coaching booster session soon.
Chapter 5: Discussion

“If you want truly to understand something, try to change it.”

-Kurt Lewin

This study sought to understand practitioner perspectives on a model for improving probation officer human service skills, with the goal of co-creating a model that would work for practitioners. In many ways, the thoughts and perspectives of supervisors have provided important insight on the SUSTAIN coaching model and raise important questions for consideration about collaborations between agencies and training developers. While individual personalities and perspectives vary, collectively the interviews do tell a cohesive story. The themes found both within and across sites underscore the importance of asking practitioners for feedback as a matter of course. While respondents may save their truest feelings for a lunch hour gripe session with co-workers, there was enough consistency in the themes both within and across sites to provide quality feedback to the SUSTAIN project. In other ways, this study provides more questions than answers. It has revealed how little we understand about the role of front-line supervisors in probation agencies and suggests continued areas of study on this crucial role within our community corrections agencies.
5.1 Understanding the probation front-line supervisor

How supervisors perceive their comfort with coaching practices and the ways in which they equivocate about it provides a sliver of insight into what it means to be a supervisor. While the majority of supervisors expressed some degree of comfort with coaching, felt coaching met an agency need, and believed it to be compatible with their supervisory role, the shadow of administrative duties loomed large, and the anxieties related to coaching were evident. Supervisors hesitate with doing anything that might hurt morale. They loath the label of micromanager. And they want to be seen as working in the trenches with staff. Without a coaching component, just by virtue of their position, supervisors are prone to role ambiguity. They represent both the worker and the agency. They both desire a method to ensure staff accountability to evidence-informed practices and have reservations with using direct observations and feedback to improve practice. To a degree, the supervisors view the most important aspects of their jobs, such as "being there" for staff, as contradictory to helping staff improve their practice. Similarly, their professed key responsibilities seem to be at odds with what they have time to do, which are mostly administrative duties.

One reasonable concern is that attempts at improving a supervisor's educative function will only further increase role ambiguity. Given this, the question is should front-line supervisors be coaches? While in the minority, there are some in the field of social work who say no, that the administrative and educative functions are fundamentally incompatible (Erera & Lazar, 1995). The field of psychology has grappled with the ethics of having a dual administrative and clinical supervision role and found
that while not ideal, it is an unavoidable reality, and that furthermore when surveyed, 82% of supervisees reported that having a supervisor with dual administrative and clinical roles was not problematic (Tromski-Klingshirn, 2007; Tromski-Klingshirn & Davis, 2007). More so than social work, the field of psychology gone farther in establishing a framework for a separate field professional clinical supervision, however, within those relationships, the clinical supervisor still has input in licensure decisions and the relationship is still susceptible to "ruptured supervisory alliance". A phenomenon Milne explicitly tackles in Evidence-Based Clinical Supervision. While the field of psychology and development of counseling practice is a bit more of a comparative stretch, it provides important insight into how other fields have grappled with the issue.

Within the field of probation, the final decision to petition the court to revoke a person's probation sentence as well as countless other important decisions rests on the front-line supervisor. Relatedly, front-line supervisors regularly engage in case staffings, or reviews of a particular probationer's situation. These can look different from agency to agency, unit to unit, and even supervisor to supervisor, and may involve treatment providers, court actors, or others. It may be a conversation between probation staff only. It might be a group conversation that includes the officer's peers, or a panel of supervisors reviewing a case with an officer or with each other. Regardless, the front-line supervisor has a key role in helping officers develop their professional practice. And yet, at most agencies, there is no training for when individuals promote from officer to supervisor, as noted by Keiron in Eliot County who recalled a conversation he had with a newly promoted supervisor who asked if he would get some sort of supervisor training,
"Nope. You can go through these things that tell you in theory what a good supervisor is, but you get no—we train POs to do their job. Supervisors do not get trained to do their job." Then later added, "We observe officers with clients. We do not observe our middle management with our officers." This study began to scratch the surface of what it means to be a front-line supervisor in probation, but further study is warranted on the processes involved with front-line supervision, and agencies would do well to state a specific vision for front-line supervision and then investigate the degree to which current front-line supervision aligns with that vision.

5.2 Co-creating a model: revising SUSTAIN processes

One misalignment between coaching and current front-line supervision practices is the latter's current focus on officer accountability. In their essay on the use of coaching in probation agencies, Pereira and Trotter (2017) begin with a critical question, "staff supervision - a forum for critical reflection and learning, or a surveillance tool?" (pg. 263). As probation agencies aim to become learning organizations continually improving officer's use of human service skills, they do so within an existing framework that may not support this effort. For decades probation has sought to surveille and control those under supervision and this milieu has extended to how probation agencies manage their staff as well. Agencies tend to focus on performance management with the use of annual performance evaluations and file audits. These administrative functions can easily encroach on educative functions and "limit the space for reflection and skill development" (Pereira & Trotter, 2017; pg. 263).
When asked what need coaching met, many respondents used words such as "accountability" and "checks and balances" and "ensuring fidelity." It is not hard to see how a model that asks supervisors to observe officers in their contacts with individuals on their caseload, rate the officer's use of skills on four-point scale, and then enter those scores into an online system from which reports are generated could be corrupted for administrative rather than educative purposes. Police agencies saw this with the implementation of COMPSTAT. As Willis et al. (2004) note, in becoming a mechanism for accountability, COMPSTAT "interfered with its own operation" (pg. 463). Much like the philosophy underpinning COMPSTAT, researchers at the Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence and Carlton University conceptualized the observation rating form as a way for agencies to make data-informed decisions. Measuring the use of skills was the only way to see changes over time and the best way to help an agency know where to focus their training efforts. This data collection system adheres to best practices for quality improvement, but as evidenced by the supervisor interviews, may unintentionally reinforce practices antithetical to coaching goals, such as improving practice by creating a safe learning environment.

When an organization relies on performance-based supervision, officers will be less likely to disclose their struggles, they will work to "sanitize" and avoid issues that do not present them in the best light (Clouder & Sellars, 2004; Revell & Burton, 2016). In a highly bureaucratic, risk averse environment, whose primary practices require continuous coaching it is imperative the organizations strike a balance between performance management and ongoing support (Wong & Lee, 2015).
Considering both supervisor hesitancy over their ability to coach as well as the primacy of their administrative duties, it seems prudent to recommend that SUSTAIN refocus the supervisor coaches' training away from scoring officers' use of skills. The observation rating form attempts to quantify a qualitative assessment. In practice, it seems unlikely that supervisors in probation agencies can both log quantitative data on use of skills for reporting to agency leadership and continue to build out their educative functions. I am left with the sense that scoring and logging such data is likely to reinforce their administrative functions. Logging scores provides the ability to more easily see changes over time; however, logging feedback could accomplish much of the same things as logging scores without the dread of being graded (on the part of the officer) and the dread of giving a grade (on the part of the coach). A shift to focus on helping coaches improve their use of feedback would accomplish much of what logging scores does with less accountability overtones.

Focusing on developing supervisors' ability to give quality feedback could help bridge the divide between supervisors’ current managerial duties, with its focus on performance management, with an expanded educative function. Feedback, and, hesitancy with giving "corrective" feedback was a theme across sites. When asked about satisfaction with coaching skills, nearly all respondents mentioned feedback, either extolling its virtues, or expressing a desire to improve, or both. Despite the desire to improve the quality of the feedback they provide officers; it was evident that supervisors were resistant to providing feedback that officers might construe as "negative." This mirrors finding from the field of social work which indicates that front-line supervisors in
social work too are concerned with supervisee's feelings. Studies of social work supervisor feedback have found that positive feedback tends to be explicit, while corrective feedback tends to be implicit (Ratliff et al., 2000) and that supervisors often withhold feedback when it is most needed (Hoffman et al., 2005). The principles of effective feedback as outlined by Kadushin and Harkness (2014; pg. 116) require that feedback be immediate, specific, behaviorally focused, descriptive and not judgmental, strengths-based, offered for consideration, tied to learning goals, collaborative, and selective. In addition to helping capture usable data, the observation rating form is meant to help supervisors anchor feedback and ensure it adheres to these principles. Rather than relying on the rating form, which may impede the goals of coaching, supervisor training could focus around the principles of effective feedback and allow practicing collaborative feedback sessions focused on particular supervision skills.

5.3 Addressing sticky implementation issues

Many of the feasibility issues noted by participants (i.e., time, officer traits, coaches' traits, organizational issues, leadership, and seeing results) are all interrelated. Leadership often brings training programs into their agency without developing detailed plans on how to sustain the efforts. While it is widely acknowledged that single shot trainings do not work, this new age of additional coaching and boosters are still not enough to ensure long-term effect on practices if they are happening within a system that does not support them. In other words, coaching reflective practitioners to use human service skills within a highly bureaucratic organization structured to support a focus on compliance might be a square peg, round hole situation. It is evident that making
coaching feasible will require structural changes. Supervisors will need help in reprioritizing their time, but that will only happen if leadership signals its’ importance. Leadership can help address some of the issues with coach traits and officer traits by revamping hiring and promoting practices. While in the minority, it is clear that some supervisors do not have the capacity for the style of leadership required for coaching. Establishing core competencies related to each role in a probation agency would be a step in the right direction. Becoming a learning organization also requires internal supports. For example, internal mentors for coaches, trainings when officers promote to supervisor, and time and space dedicated for learning. Developing these internal supports requires a proactive effort on the part of agency leadership. But that leads to a question about where the responsibility for overseeing implementation readiness, and program adaption falls.

5.4 Whose responsibility is it?

On January 23, 2015, I received an email from my contact at the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole Agency asking for a one page write up or summary of SOARING2 to provide to a judge who was requesting the information. According to the contact, a "millionaire rapper" was requesting his defense attorney attend his probation contact sessions with him. His probation officer said she was not sure that the agency would allow that because she "had to use SOARING on him." This kerfuffle made its way back to the judge who then asked for information on SOARING2. The agency reached out to us. At the time, the agency had been involved in SOARING2 training for two years. This situation was one illustration of the failure of SOARING2 to accomplish its goals of improving officer practice. Not only did the officer not understand the skills
associated with SOARING2, her supervisor had also not been able to provide the appropriate guidance. Following the end of the grant, the agency did not continue with SOARING2. In their evaluation of the SOARING2 project in Philadelphia, researchers at Temple University noted line officers and supervisors alike expressed cynicism about the sustainability of most new initiatives, indicating that everything is temporary, changes come so often, and decisions are largely based on funding (i.e., once the grant ends, so does the initiative associated with it), which makes it difficult for POs to buy into each new change.

Universities and for-profit companies creating trainings for probation must ask themselves where their responsibility for sustainability begins and ends. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) recommends that organizations wanting to implement change first conduct a best practices assessment. This is a formal assessment completed by a person who trained by NIRN. The trained assessor conducts the interview on with the organization’s implementation team. It requires the agency do preliminary preparatory work and the assessment itself lasts several hours. Most projects do not budget for this initial implementation planning. And often those scholars or businesses that offer training programs do not tend to stray from their proposed model to wade deeply into implementation issues. At the same time, many scholars and businesses that offer probation agency trainings are aware of the complexity of implementation issues. While dealing with many potential feasibility issues is outside the scope of any single training effort, there should be an effort to understand the repercussion of the changes one is attempting to implement and confront the realities of those tasked with
implementing them. Every project should include a continuous feedback loop that aims to continually adapt organizational practices and the training itself.

5.5 Limitations

As the goal of this study was to learn more about participants perspectives of the SUSTAIN coaching model, a major limitation to the study is the author acting as both trainer and interviewer and the possible bias on interviewee response. To combat this, I assured the interviewee that honest responses can only improve future implementation efforts. I distanced myself as creator of the materials and assured interviewee that I would not take any feedback personally. Another limitation is selection bias wherein those who agree to participate in the interview are not representative of the larger group, or the findings do not include certain perspectives. While this study does not claim to make generalizability claims, I should note that the small sample size and number of sites preclude generalizability. It is also possible that this sample represents a greater than average coach friendly perspective as half of the sample is from an organization that has begun supervisor coaching to some degree.

As with many things in life, hindsight is 20/20 and in retrospect there are several things I would do differently. For example, I would be more explicit at the start of the interview about what I was asking about regarding SUSTAIN coaching, so respondents did not conflate my questions about coaching with the eLearning or with EPICS or MI coaching. To get a better measure of acceptability, I would ask respondents about their experience with various coaching skills and processes rather than ask them about their comfort with practices they have no practical experience with. And finally, I would
include more notes from the in-person trainings to better triangulate the data. While I have jottings and memories, future feedback processes will include detailed field notes from the trainings to both triangulate the data from the interviews as well as provide voice to those who do participate in the one on one interviews.

**Conclusion**

In their day-to-day work, probations officers have enormous discretion in deciding how they supervise and how they make important decisions such as when or whether to violate a person (Jones & Kerbs, 2007). If probation wants to take up the mantel of human service work, it must dedicate itself to creating reflective practitioners. This is not something that can begin and end at the line officer level. To this end, supervisors must become more than the sum of their administrative function, and agency leaders must ensure that the organization supports these efforts. In studying what works to change problem behavior, how probation officers might improve their use of skills, and how a person can become reflective, scholars have much to offer. However, in understanding how these principles and practices work for particular people, encountering particular problems, in particular agencies scholars have much to learn.
Appendix A: Overview of RNR Principles

**The Overarching Principles**

1. **Respect for the Person and the Normative Context:** Services are delivered with respect for the person, including respect for personal autonomy, being humane, ethical, just, legal, and being otherwise normative. Some norms may vary with the agencies or the particular setting within which services are delivered. For example, agencies working with young offenders may be expected to show exceptional attention to education issues and to child protection. Mental health agencies may attend to issues of personal well-being. Some agencies working with female offenders may place a premium on attending to trauma and/or to parenting concerns.

2. **Psychological Theory:** Base programs on an empirically solid psychological theory (e.g., general Personality and Cognitive Social Learning).

3. **General Enhancement of Crime Prevention Services:** The reduction of criminal victimization may be viewed as legitimate objective of service agencies, including agencies within and outside of justice and corrections.

**The Core RNR Principles and Key Clinical Issues**

4. **Introduce Human Service:** Introduce human service into the justice context. Do not rely on the sanction to bring about reduced offending. Do not rely on deterrence, restoration, or other principles of justice.

5. **Risk:** Match intensity of service with risk level of cases. Work with moderate and higher risk cases. Generally, avoid creating interactions of low-risk cases with higher-risk cases.

6. **Need:** Target predominately criminogenic needs. More criminogenic needs in the direction of becoming strengths.

7. **General Responsivity:** Employ behavioral, social learning, and cognitive behavioral influence and skill building strategies.

8. **Specific Responsivity:** Adapt the style and mode of service according to the setting of service and to relevant characteristics of individual offenders, such as their strengths, motivations, preferences, personality, age, gender, ethnicity, cultural identifications, and other factors.

9. **Breadth:** Target a number of criminogenic needs relative to noncriminogenic needs.

10. **Strength:** Assess strengths to enhance prediction and specific responsivity factors.

11. **Structured Assessment:** a. **Assessment of Strengths and Risk-Need-Specific Responsivity:** Employ structured and validated assessment instrument. b. **Integrated Assessment and Intervention:** The assessment should inform every intervention and contact.

12. **Professional Discretion:** Deviate from recommendations only for very specific reasons.

**Organizational Principles: Setting, Staffing, and Management**

13. **Community-based:** Community-based services are preferred but the principles of RNR also apply with residential and institutional settings.

14. **Core Correctional Practices:** Effectiveness of interventions is enhanced with delivered by therapists and staff with high-quality relationships in combination with high-quality structuring skills. Quality relationships are characterized as respectful, caring, enthusiastic, collaborative, valuing personal autonomy, and using motivational interviewing to engage the client in treatment. Structuring practices include prosocial modeling, effective reinforcement.
and disapproval, skill building, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, effective use of authority and advocacy/brokerage.

| 15. Management: Promote the selection, training, and clinical supervision of staff according to RNR and introduce monitoring, feedback, and adjustment systems. Build systems and cultures supportive of effective practice and continuity of care. Some additional specific indicators of integrity include having program manuals available, monitoring of service process and intermediate changes, adequate dosage, and involving researchers in the design and delivery of service. |
Appendix B: SUSTAIN Core Coaching Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of EBPs</td>
<td>Understands historical, philosophical, and legal basis of community corrections. Knows how the values of person-centered care applies to community corrections work. Understands how evidence-based practices should look in practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Quality Relationships</td>
<td>Creates rapport with approachableness, empathy, reflective listening, and genuine interest. Sets expectations for officers regarding use of evidence-based practices, including why they are asked to use these skills, how they tie into the agency’s overall goals, and what success looks like. Observes with suspended judgment, curiosity, and humility. Preparers for coaching session by understanding own emotions and contemplating questions to gain better insight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication</td>
<td>Is able to be honest with colleagues while also maintaining a good quality relationship. Can spot when a conversation is getting away from healthy dialogue. Able to engage in healthy dialogue even when another may be experiencing high emotionality. Moves dialogue into action - tailored to the individual’s level of motivation – and documents decisions and follows up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Coaching</td>
<td>Manages the session by either holding attentive space, managing free flow discussions or offering structures and exercises. Fosters mutual trust among group members by creating a culture of empathic understanding, unconditional respect for each person, and increasing honesty and authenticity. Supports and challenges the group to engage actively in its own development, maintenance, and possibly repair work to increasingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating Individual Learning</td>
<td>Manages - Leads the coaching session. Explains why the learning is taking place. Uses ‘scaffolding.’ Makes sure that the session flows smoothly. Observes - Explicitly monitors, checks, or evaluates the officer’s work/competence. Encourages work-related data collection or analysis. Sets Goals - Sets goals collaboratively. Ensures that goals/objectives SMART. Engages in Feedback - Uses the Asks-Share-Ask-Share method. Uses Questions - Gathers information (e.g., open and closed questions) and seeks to raise the officer’s awareness (exploratory open-ended questions; Socratic questioning, etc.). Formulates Cases - Encourages the officer to analyze, synthesize, and generate an explanation for client behavior. Prompts - Reminds the officer about relevant material by prompting and cueing them (e.g., ‘sounds like your earlier point’).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaches</strong></td>
<td>Provides information about theories, facts, figures, ideas, methods, articles, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrates</strong></td>
<td>Actively attempts to develop the officer’s competence by demonstrating/modelling/illustrating the correct performance of a skill (e.g., behavioral rehearsal, simulations, videos).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trains</strong></td>
<td>Engages officer in an appropriate experiential activity, designed to facilitate experiential learning through discovery/trial-and-error experimentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Observation Benchmark Rating Form

Observation Benchmark Rating Form

For each of the following skills, circle the number that best characterizes the extent to which the officer uses the skill, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Missed Opportunity</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Area for Improvement</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**WORKING RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**

1. Understands or makes an effort to grasp the individual’s perspective and experience. (EXPRESSES EMPATHY) 0 1 2 3 N/A
2. Actively listens to what the individual has to say. (ACTIVELY LISTENS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
3. Demonstrates a firm but fair supervision style when working with the individual. (FIRM BUT FAIR) 0 1 2 3 N/A
4. Uses authoritative not authoritarian style with the probationer. (AUTHORITATIVE) 0 1 2 3 N/A
5. Helps establish a mutual understanding of the purpose and expectations of supervision, the role of the officer, and the part the individual plays in the process. (CLARIFIES ROLES) 0 1 2 3 N/A

**ENGAGEMENT SKILLS**

6. Uses affirmations when appropriate. (AFFIRMS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
7. Expresses confidence that the individual can be successful. (EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE) 0 1 2 3 N/A
8. Encourages individual participation in setting case plan goals. (ALIGNS GOALS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
9. Encourages and/or recognizes change talk. (PROMOTES CHANGE TALK) 0 1 2 3 N/A
10. Effectively reinforces compliance, accomplishments, and/or prosocial behavior. (PROVIDES REINFORCEMENT) 0 1 2 3 N/A

**RISK ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT SKILLS**

11. Effectively completes risk/need assessment to get accurate information to inform case plan. (RISK/NEED ASSESSMENT) 0 1 2 3 N/A
12. Effectively discusses and addresses criminogenic needs. (DISCUSSES CRIM NEEDS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
13. Addresses changes in an individual’s dynamic risk factors that may increase the risk of reoffending. (ADDRESS ACUTE RISK) 0 1 2 3 N/A
14. Helps individual manage triggers. (MANAGES TRIGGERS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
15. Reinforces stabilizing influences in individual’s life. (REINFORCES STABILIZERS) 0 1 2 3 N/A
Appendix D: Survey Methods

Prior to the start of each project three of the four sites provided a list of names and emails to the research team. The survey was sent to those on the list via Qualtrics online survey software. In Galbraith County and Hooks County the entire agency received the survey via email. In Tiptree County, only those in intensive supervision units (IPS) received the survey link. The survey was sent electronically via Qualtrics software. The response rates for each survey were 67% for Galbraith County, 79% for Hooks County, and 81% for Tiptree County. Response rates were calculated by dividing the number of surveys sent by the number of surveys completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Galbraith (n=41)</th>
<th>Hooks (n=37)</th>
<th>Tiptree (n=143)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>83.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Management</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-ethnic</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview is to learn your perspective on the SUSTAIN coaching model. I will be asking you questions about SUSTAIN coaching and its various elements. Please be candid and as detailed as you can. Examples are particularly useful.

Your insights will be valuable to improving future training, and future implementation efforts in your organization.

A. BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

1. To begin, can you tell me a little bit about your background in this agency? How long have you worked here, and how long have you been a supervisor?

2. In what ways, if any, has the job of supervisor changed since your time in the role? How have the agency’s expectations of a supervisor changed?

3. What do you consider to be your top responsibilities as a supervisor?
   a. What does the agency expect you to get accomplished?

4. How would you describe your supervisory style?
   a. Hands off/Hands on?
   b. Motivation techniques?

5. How were you told that you would be trained to be a SUSTAIN coach?

Now I would like to turn to the practice of coaching. Specifically, I would like to get your insights on how you perceive the SUSTAIN coaching model.

B. ACCEPTABILITY OF SUSTAIN COACHING MODEL

6. After experiencing the coaches’ training, some supervisors are comfortable with being a SUSTAIN coach while others are not. How would you describe your comfort with being a coach? (Please explain)

7. To what extent do you view the SUSTAIN coaching method as a useful way of improving your officers’ skills? Please explain.
8. In what ways will being a SUSTAIN coach make your job as a supervisor either
easier or more difficult?

C. APPROPRIATNESS OF SUSTAIN COACHING MODEL

9. In your opinion, who in your agency should have primary responsibility for
developing staff skills?

10. From your perspective what is the best way to develop the professional skills of
the supervision officers?

11. How relevant is the SUSTAIN coaching model to the needs of your agency?
   a. Can you give me some examples of the needs that coaching helps meet?

12. How does the coaching method align with your current managerial practices?

13. Thinking back on the coaching skills covered in the training, which skills do you
envision using in your regular practice?
   a. Which of the skills are you least likely to use?

D. FEASIBILITY OF SUSTAIN COACHING MODEL

14. What are some of the major obstacles to you coaching officers regularly?

15. How might coaching look in practice?
   a. What about the observations and feedback process specifically?

16. How prepared is your agency to implement coaching on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being
not prepared at all and 10 being completely prepared?

17. What would make it more likely that you regularly coach your officers?
   a. How would the SUSTAIN coaching model need to change to make it even
more likely that you would use it to regularly coach your officers?
   b. What would your agency need to do make it more likely that you regularly
coach your officers?

“I have one final question. Is there anything else that you think would be helpful for me
to know about your experience with the coaches’ training or coaching in general?

That’s about all from me. Is there anything that I did not cover that you think is important
for me to know as we move forward with implementing coaching in your agency?
Thanks, so much for your time.
References


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.11.008


https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.12.024


https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854804270618


https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-018-1057-z


Dowden, C. (1998). *A Meta-analytic examination of the risk, need and responsivity principles and their importance within the rehabilitation debate.* [Text, Carleton University]. https://curve.carleton.ca/d453a97b-6cc9-4b72-8a13-50586b31b262


Executive Session on Community Corrections. (2017). *Toward an Approach to Community Corrections for the 21st Century: Consensus Document of the Executive Session on Community Corrections. Program in Criminal Justice*


Miles, M. B. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (Fourth edition.). SAGE.


Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & Vianen, A. E. M. van. (2014). Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an


Biography

Heather Toronjo received her Bachelor of Arts in Arthrology from Texas A&M University in 2003. She received her Master of Public Policy from George Mason University in 2013.