The Core Four: Promoting Social Support in Case Management

- Presented as an APPA Virtual Webinar

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- Phil Galli & Shawn Trusten

Overview of Presentation

- History of social support theory.

- Scale development.

- Survey/data collection.

- Case management.

Our Professional Backgrounds

Our Interest in Social Support

- Drawing from professional experience.

- Still underdeveloped in criminological literature/research.

- Pilot project.

- Theory => Practice.

Background/History

- Part of social science research since the 1970s.

- Positive social support may insulate an individual from negative life outcomes.

- Introduced to better understand crime in 1990s (Cullen, 1994).

- A possible protective factor against future crime involvement.

- Part of risk assessment tools (LSI-R, ORAS, etc.).

Social Support Theory

- Social support comes from family, friends/peers, coworkers/classmates, teammates, club members, etc.

- Support in correctional settings may come from other justice-involved persons, correctional staff, visitors, mail and phone calls, and religion.

Social Support Theory, Cont'd

- Social networks/pools of available resources.

- Buffers negative life events, but unlikely to completely eliminate them.

- An interdisciplinary concept.

- May "soften the blow" for negative life events.

Theory, Cont'd

- An interaction between at least two people and involving some type of helpful behavior.

- Insulates individuals, facilitates coping, and acts as a stress buffer.

- Familial social support early in life is predictive of more support later in life.

Areas of Interest

- Instrumental & Expressive.

- Perceived & Received.

- Magnitude & Application.

- Frequency & Duration.

Types of Support

Conceptualization/Type	Definition	Example
Instrumental	Tangible support including items such as financial aid and childcare help.	Providing transportation assistance to an individual for work/school purposes.
Expressive	Support that comes in the form of listening to an individual's problems and providing possible solutions.	Making eye contact with a person while they are sharing a story and other forms of engaging behavior.
Perceived	An individual's opinion on the <u>quality</u> of support being offered.	While only spending a small amount of time with a spouse, it is an enriching experience.
Received	An individual's opinion on the <u>quantity</u> of support they get.	An individual can count on 5 family members for support.

The Core Four Social Support Scale

- 28-items (questions) requiring an agree/disagree (yes/no) response.

- Four categories (each type of support) with seven items in each.

- Items grounded in theory.

Example Items

Subscales from The Family Support Scale with sample items

Subscale	Sample Item
Instrumental Support	I believed family members would provide whatever they could tangibly (i.e., money) to support me.
Expressive Support	A family member acknowledged my problems.
Received Support	I don't believe that my family gave me enough support.*
Perceived Support	I wish family members would be more engaged while offering me support.*

Note: These items were reverse coded in the dataset to reflect an accurate report of social support.

Total Support Scale Thresholds

0-8: Low

9-17: Medium

18-27: High

Dimension Support Thresholds

0-2: Low

3-4: Medium

5-7: High (5-6 for the Received Dimension).

Research Efforts

- Data collected in both community and custodial populations.

- Convenience sampling procedure.

- Limited generalizability.
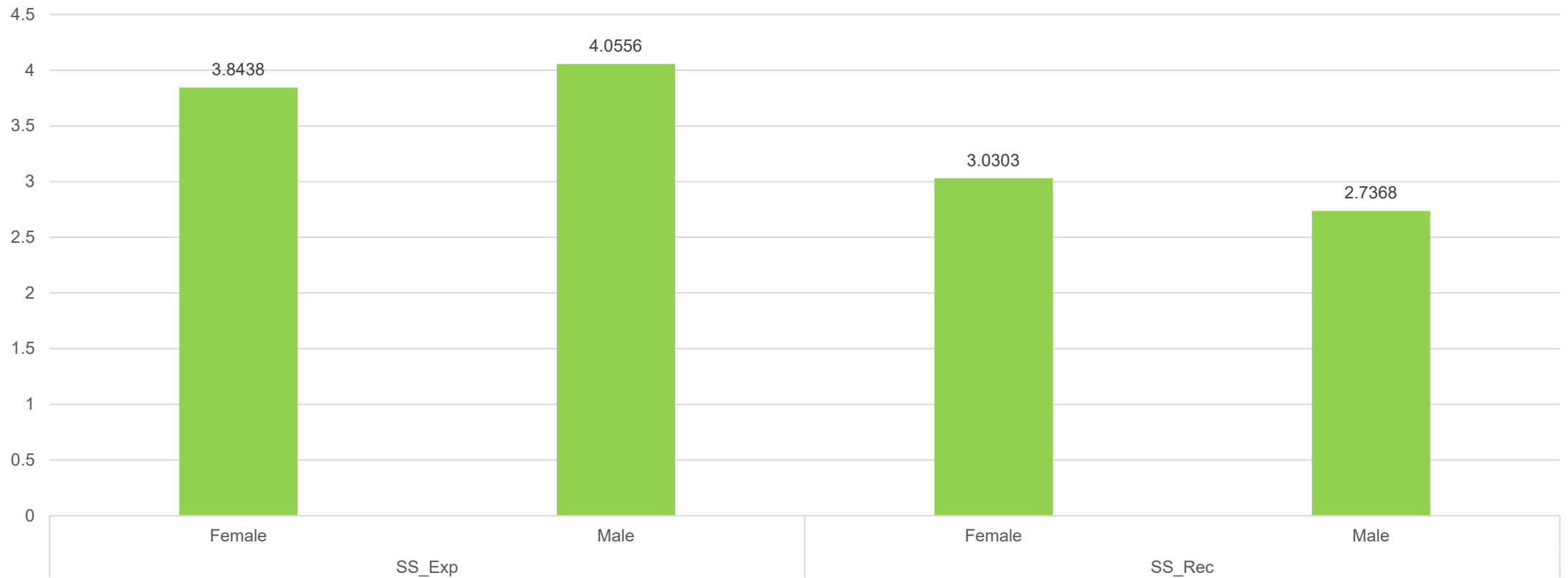
- Results to inform practice.

Social Support Results

Subscale	Group	N	Mean
Instru_SS			
	Orient.	52	5.03
	Non-Com.	19	5.42
Expre_SS			
	Orient.	58	5.70
	Non-Com.	20	5.90
Rec_SS			
	Orient.	55	4.83
	Non-Com.	20	5.05
Per_SS			
	Orient.	52	5.51
	Non-Com.	15	5.66

Results, Cont'd

Social Support Subscales
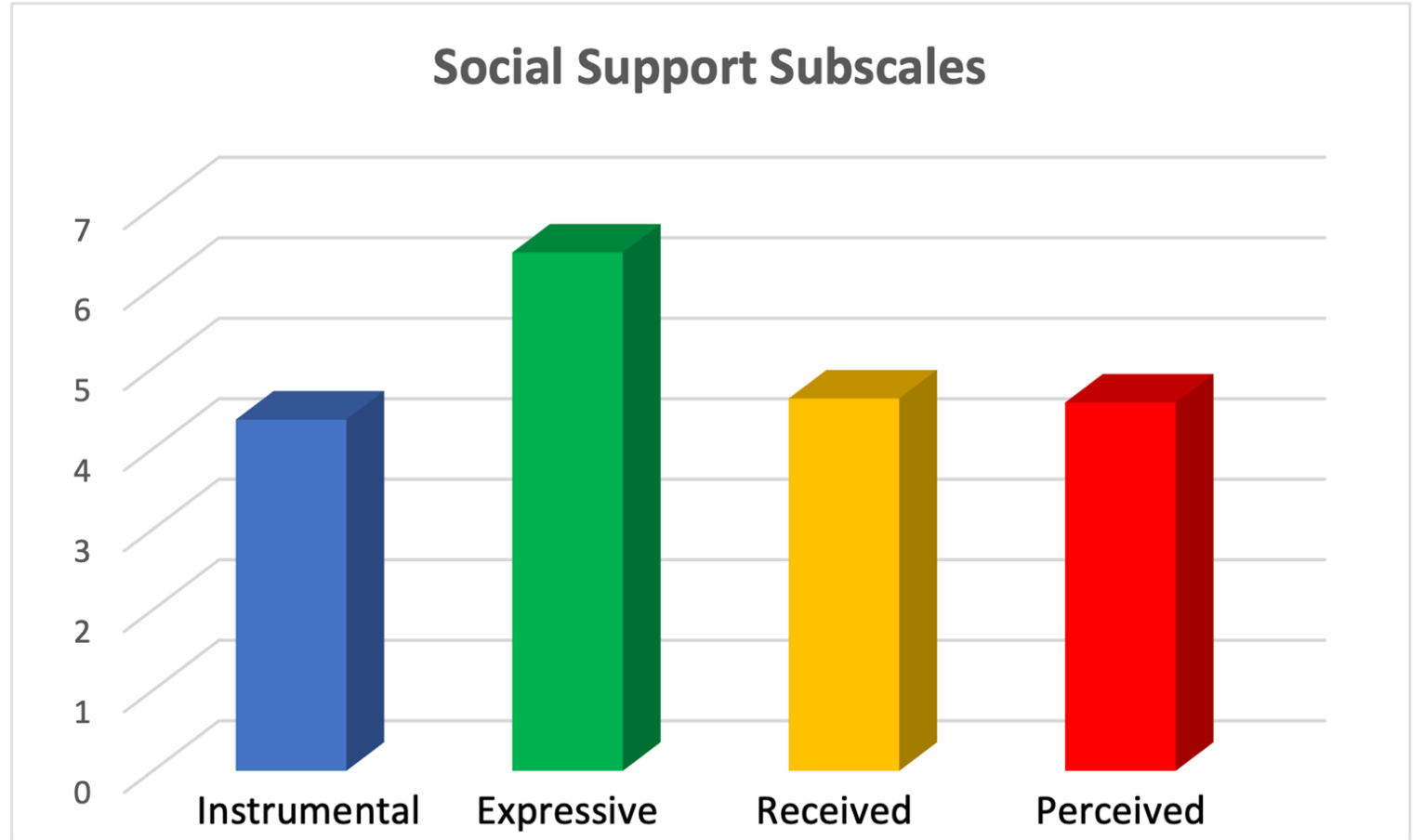
Gender Comparison

Some Conclusions

- Social support matters.
  - How can it be enhanced for justice-involved persons?

- Emotional support is as important as, if not more so, tangible support (i.e., receiving money).

- It may be those in the orientation group are newer to the criminal justice system and have been subject to shame/embarrassment/guilt from family.

- Additionally, newer justice-involved individuals may blame family for a lack of a support and being involved in the criminal legal system.

Practical Implications

- Community corrections agencies may wish to designate certain officers for additional training on enhancing family support (trainer-the-trainer).

- It may be necessary to educate clients about the importance of support or having a network to lean on. This may take the form of support groups for clients and their families.

Practical Implications, Cont'd

- CCOs can tailor a specific case management plan which seeks to enhance the areas of social support that are important to their success.

- Improving expressive support may best be accomplished by providing programs such as family counseling where communication skills (i.e., active listening and providing constructive feedback) are taught.

Implications, Cont'd

- Other topics of importance may include teaching empathy, the effects of enabling, and mitigating the use of co-dependency.

- Perceived social support may be increased by teaching individuals positive coping skills so they can interact constructively with family members when asking for help.

Policy

- Support should be specific to each of the four areas (Instrumental, Expressive, Perceived, Received).

- Support discussions should be focal points in case management.

- Consider support in relation to risk.

- Community corrections should consider programs which emphasize building support between family members and justice-involved individuals.

Community Social Support

- If no family/friends, support may come from community members (e.g., faith-based organizations).

- It is important justice-involved persons have an "anchor" in the community.

Other Contributions

- Explicitly consider social support as a protective factor (extractable).

- Case management should be specific to each of the four areas of social support.

- Social support promotes desistance.

So, now what?

- One of the most important questions for a practitioner

- Practitioner frustration with research (and researchers!)

- How can we take what we've discovered about the clients we serve and use it to help them?

Desistance and the Core 4 Social Supports

- Desistance literature suggests the importance of social support in identity transformation

- These two areas - social capital and identity transformation, along with the development of human capital, leads to client change

- How does a client discovering their Core 4 Social Supports impact desistance?

The Core 4 Social Support and Risk Assessments

- Risk assessments identify the roadmap for working with a client during their supervision
- Most areas of criminogenic need are impacted by the levels of social support a client has
- LS/CMI example:
  - Companions
  - Family/Marital
  - Education/Employment
  - Leisure/Recreation
  - Many areas under the Case Management Inventory
- Risk assessments typically inform case planning

The Core 4 Social Support and Risk Assessments

- Upon completion of a risk assessment, the supervising agent could administer the Core 4 Social Supports Assessment

- Our Assessment would provide the client and agent a deep dive into their levels of social support around the Core 4 Social Supports

- Results could be reviewed and shared as a companion to a risk assessment

But what, then?

- We have a risk assessment, we have our Core 4 Social Supports assessment, but what then?

- Agents are very skilled with the risk assessment-to-case plan transition

- Could agents also become skilled in the social support assessment-to-intervention transition?

- Of course they can! Introducing the Core 4 Social Supports Workbook!

Core 4 Social Support Workbook

- Identifies with the client *their* individual needs around social support.

- Identifies with the client *their* individual strengths around social support.

- Allows the supervising agent to collaborate with the client and broker services around *this client's* individual social support needs.

Core 4 Social Support Workbook

- How does it work?

- Received Social Support is reviewed first, with the client identifying by name, nickname, HOWEVER, the personal (i.e. family, friends) and professional (i.e. probation officer, therapist) supports they currently have

- The client identifies the types of support *they* need under each of the remaining three areas - Expressed, Perceived, and Received

Core 4 Social Support Workbook

- The needs under the remaining three areas (Expressed, Perceived, and Instrumental) are as individualized as the people you serve

- The Core 4 Workbook can be used at any time and in many different ways

- Could be used for support in general, or for something as specific as planning for a sober life over the next 90 days

The Core 4 Workbook and Case Planning

- Example

  - Chemically dependent client required to participate in CD Tx
  - Core 4 Assessment identifies client has limited support in both Expressive and Instrumental supports
  - Client notes that their Expressed needs include discussing recovery
  - Client notes that their Instrumental needs include transportation to treatment
  - For Expressed needs, the agent could discuss Narcotics Anonymous or Health Realization groups with client, and provide information
  - For Instrumental needs, the agent could discuss medical transportation options, or provide funds for public transit

The Core 4 Workbook and Case Planning

- Example

  - POR/SO client required to register
  - Core 4 Assessment identifies client has limited support in Perceived support
  - Client notes that their Perceived needs surround having someone to talk to about their feelings of isolation
  - Client identifies his sister under Received support as a strength
  - For Perceived need, the agent could discuss how the client could spend more time with his sister, and provide information on therapy services, and could seek a mentorship program for justice-impacted people

Thank You!

Questions?

Phil Galli & Shawn Trusten

core4socialsupports@proton.me