

EXPLORING THE IMPLICATIONS OF EX-OFFENDER REENTRY
ON FAMILY MEMBER FUNCTIONING UTILIZING
THE DOUBLE ABCX MODEL OF FAMILY STRESS
IN A MIXED METHODS APPROACH

A DISSERTATION

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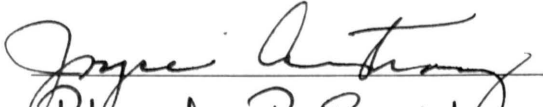
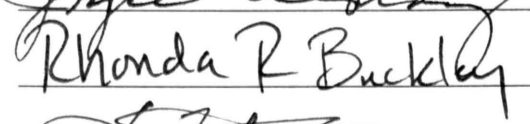
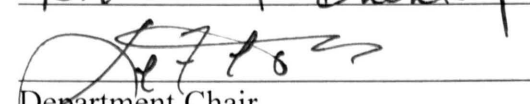
To the Dean of the Graduate School:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Shelia E. Lumar entitled "Exploring the Implications of Ex-Offender Reentry on Family Member Functioning Utilizing the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress in a Mixed Methods Approach". I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Family Studies.




Linda Ladd, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:




Department Chair

Accept:



Dean of the Graduate School

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ABSTRACT

SHELIA E. LUMAR

EXPLORING THE IMPLICATIONS OF EX-OFFENDER REENTRY ON FAMILIES UTILIZING THE DOUBLE ABCX MODEL OF FAMILY STRESS ADJUSTMENT AND ADAPTATION: A MIXED METHODS APPROACH

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This study used a mixed methods approach to examine family member experiences with ex-offender reentry using the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation (Double ABCX Model) with a sample of family members from the North Texas area. This study had two goals: 1) to test the Double ABCX Model with the targeted population of families of ex-offenders; and, 2) to gain a deeper understanding of how family members process the challenges they face once they learn of the offender's impending release and, then, when the ex-offender is released and rejoins the family. This sample consisted of 23 adult family members (16 females and 7 males) who reported that they had accepted responsibility for the ex-offender following his/her release from prison. From this sample, four groups emerged based upon their relationship with the ex-offender: six spouses, seven parents, seven siblings and three adult children. Qualitative interviews focused on those factors from the Double ABCX Model that describe how the family members dealt initially with the notification that the offender was returning home and, then, how the family members processed and dealt with the ex-offender's actual return over four periods of time (1-5 months, 6-11 month,

12-17 months, and 18-24 months). Quantitative data was gathered on the final factors of the Model to measure family adaptation over time with the Family Crisis Orientation Personal Evaluation Scale (F-COPES) (McCubbin, Olsen & Larsen 1981) and the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) (McCubbin, McCubbin & 1987). A linear regression was used to compare family member scores from both instruments with several variables and a significant relationship was found between the FHI and the relationship of the family member and the length of time since the ex-offender had left prison. While the small sample size limited the generalizability of the study, data produced by the qualitative interviews and the quantitative findings indicate that the Double ABCX Model remains a useful theoretical model for understanding how families adapt and process stressful experiences associated with the ex-offender reentry. This study generated many implications, but among the most important is the need for policy makers, practitioners and clinicians to provide services for families of the ex-offenders both before and after the ex-offender leaves prison. The findings in this study also support the need for additional research to explore the dynamics of ex-offender reentry on adult family members and children using various theoretical methodologies.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Having a loved one return from incarceration is a challenging process along many dimensions of the family. Most family members assume that the homecoming is a time of joy and celebration, yet for most families this is a period that is stressful for both the ex-offender and the family member. Researchers such as LaVigne, Brooks and Shollenberger, (2007), Naser and Visser (2006), Travis, McBride and Solomon , (2005); Visser and Courtney (2007); examined the consistency of ex-offender reentry found that family support is vital to the success of the ex-offender. But yet, family scientists know very little about how the family members respond, cope, adjust and adapt to the ex-offender rejoining the family. It is widely known that most offenders imprisoned in the criminal justice system eventually leave incarceration in route to their families and communities with a host of unmet needs and lack personal resources to sustain independent living. This places the family member in position of taking on the personal responsibility of supporting the ex-offender needs, which have been found to be a primary source of strain and stress for family members during the ex-offender reentry process (Shollenberger, 2009).

Researchers in the field of criminal justice and family sciences have not given adequate attention to examining the lived experiences of families faced with having an offender return from incarceration. Adult family members' experiences with ex-offender

reentry are often reported from the ex-offender perspective. Common issues include examining the ex-offender's pathological family patterns as they contribute to their criminal activity (Travis, 2001); the prisoner's experience with family contact while incarcerated; the degree to which incarceration disrupts family life; and, the challenges the ex-offender encounter upon release (Naser & Visser, 2006; Visser & Travis, 2003).

Research studies exploring the plight of the ex-offender commonly highlight reentry from the ex-offender's point of view (La Vigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2009; LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Naser & LaVigne, 2006; Severance, 2004; Travis & Petersilla, 2001). A few descriptive studies exploring ex-offender reentry have expanded their scientific lens to encompass the family member's experiences when ex-offenders reenter their lives (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Shollenberger, 2009); however, these researchers have fallen short in applying a family, systemic perspective when attempting to explain how the reunion of the ex-offender manifests stress in the families. This lack of scientific exploration of the implications ex-offender reentry has on their family members is an egregious oversight since the ex-offender is more likely than not, to reside with family member after release from incarceration (Visser & Travis, 2003).

The homecoming of the ex-offender brings with it uncertainty and stress due partly to the adjustments that must be made to provide the family with a sense of balance and control over family life matters (Furstenberg, 1995; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). Family members have been found to offer both voluntary and involuntary assistance during the

transition of the newly released ex-offender into society. Researchers indicate that family members play a vital role during the reentry process and family support is critical to the ex-offender success (Naser & La Vigne, 2006). Sharpio & Schwartz (2001) stipulates that as the family members provide assistance with housing, employment and psychological support during reentry, the ex-offender is more likely to decrease continued participation in criminality and stands a better change of rebuilding personal relationships with family and friends.

Researchers examining ex-offender reentry commonly employ a scientific lens that places emphasis on the detection of various levels of pathology adversely influencing the ex-offender reentry. This scope of scientific inquiry does not provide a description of the resilient nature of both the ex-offender and adult family members when faced with stress-evoking events related to reentry. Unfortunately, ex-offender reentry is often evaluated as a challenge exclusive to the ex-offender without considering the implications the reunion has on other adult family members. The actions and behaviors of the ex-offender and adult family members do not occur in a vacuum, they are integrated. Thus, it more beneficial to approach the ex-offender reentry phenomenon from a systemic standpoint that evaluates family functioning from a holistic perspective (Visser & Castro, 2006). In addition, it is important to acknowledge that changes in the functionality of one individual family member also lead to changes within the entire family system.

Prior to their incarceration, many ex-offenders lived with their family that includes children, spouses and romantic partners, extended family and fictive kin. But due to the

forced separation brought on by incarceration, many of these relationships deteriorate, placing additional burdens on the family system during reunification (LaVigne, Brooks & Shollenberger, 2007). The family unit is an integrated unit functioning accordingly to shared meanings and beliefs. When a major or minor disruption, dependent upon personal meaning and perception, occurs within the family system, such as ex-offender reentry, the family members call upon numerous resources to fight the disruption as an attempt to restore the family back to its previous state of homeostasis that existed before the stress provoking event occurred (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

To efficiently build strategies in support of these families, it is important for practitioners, scholars, and researchers to understand the common experiences shared by family members impacted by ex-offender reentry and how these experiences evoke stressful family relations. In doing so, this deepens professional understanding about this phenomenon and will allow for the development of effective practices and policies designed to assist the ex-offender and their family members with the reintegration of the ex-offender back into the family.

Statement of the Problem

When a family member becomes incarcerated they leave behind a trail of vulnerable children and fragmented families, which invariably leads to family stress when the offenders return after incarceration (Severance, 2004). The causes for incarceration are varied and complex and are highly dependent upon the length and duration an individual participates with criminality (Arditti, 2006; LaVigne, Visser, & Castro, 2004; Naser &

Visher, 2007;). As the number of incarcerated persons increase, the number of ex-offenders returning to their communities after incarceration also increases (Travis, 2001).

Researchers have described the role of adult family members during the reentry process when they are the sole provider of support for the ex-offender's needs (La Vigne, Visher & Castro, 2004; Naser & La Vigne 2006; Travis, 2005; Visher & Travis, 2003). A few studies on ex-offender reentry report that the ex-offenders placed greater value on the role of the adult family members in their reentry process than they did when they were incarcerated (La Vigne & Visher, 2006; Naser, 2007). Yet, scholars have not accurately assessed how adult family members respond to the needs of the ex-offender upon reentry or how they perceive their own resources and coping strategies needed to provide such support that the ex-offenders successful transition back into the family and community.

When the incarcerated family member is in prison, family members learn to adjust by developing either adaptive or maladaptive coping strategies that sustain family functioning (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001). After the release of the ex-offender and his/her eventual return home, the adult family members undergo additional adjustments that require modifications in their family life such as renegotiating parental roles, modifying financial budgets to address the ex-offender's expenses, managing strained family interactions and dealing with addiction and substance abuse and mental health problems (La Vigne, Visher & Castro, 2004). Family members not only have to face challenges stemming from assisting the ex-offender, but also contend with societal pressures that views family members of the ex-offended as deviant and pathological.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this concurrent, mixed-methods study was to shed light on how adult family members respond to the experience of coping and adapting to the reentry of the ex-offender into their lives after incarceration by applying a family stress perspective. Since family members' relationships with ex-offenders during reentry has not been fully explored or documented, this study built on and adds to the body of literature concerning ex-offender reentry from the family member perspective and provides family scholars and practitioners with a better understanding of how reentry affects family life. The researcher applied the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adjustment and Adaptation (McCubbin, McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) to the family member's experience of having a loved one return after release from incarceration and their specific reaction of the family member to the ex-offender's return as measured by the way family members experience stress, draw on coping strategies in an attempt to manage change brought on by ex-offender reentry and adapt over time to the ex-offender's return over time (Figley, 1993). This research study did build limited studies in this area and encourage further exploration relating to this population. This study also served as a starting point to begin discussions about developing policies, practices and interventions designed for strengthening overall family relations when working with families impacted by the ex-offender reentry process. This study further extended the well-researched Double ABCX Family Stress, Adaptation, and Adjustment Model (McCubbin, McCubbin & Patterson, 1987) to a new population, the ex-offender family.

Rationale for the Study

As the number of persons entering the U.S. criminal justice system continues to increase, it is expected that a greater portion of those incarcerated will eventually be released to return to their communities and families (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008). More and more ex-offenders will return to the families in hopes of receiving support to assist with their successful reintegration back into the community after imprisonment. The joy of the reunion often fades over time due to the challenges that quickly intrude of on the family life. These challenges are associated with the strains of supporting the ex-offender, while the family member attempts to reorganize their lives as quickly as possible.

The literature have thoroughly documented the impact incarceration has on children, adults, families and communities while the offender is incarcerated. Professionals know very little as to the dynamics of how ex-offender reentry affects adult family members and the ability of those family members to sustain family functioning in the midst of the changes brought on by the reentry process. Thus, the rationale for this study explored family member experiences with ex-offender reentry as the avenue to further our understanding of the phenomenon and to set the pathway for family scholars to begin conducting research studies to examine families distressed by ex-offender reentry.

Theoretical Framework

The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adaption and Adjustment (Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985) was used as the theoretical lens to guide this study. According to the basic tenets of this theory, as family members encounter stressful

situations they engage in a systemic and progressive process of evaluating their personal resources while defining the stressful event according to their subjective interpretation of the event. Scholars and researchers have consistently documented that ex-offender reentry can be a very stressful period for both the ex-offender and their family members, but have not applied a theoretical framework to explore stress-related phenomenon as experienced by those impacted by ex-offender reentry (LaVigne, Brooks & Shollenberger, 2007; Petersilla, 2001; Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005). Thus, the principal researcher applied the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adaption, and Adjustment to assess the model's usefulness and effectiveness identifying and exploring stress-related factors associated with ex-offender reentry. These perspectives allowed insights to be gained from adult family member's experiences in relation to the homecoming of the ex-offender after incarceration. Adult family members were interviewed and their experiences with ex-offender reentry were thoroughly explored in order to authenticate this phenomenon.

Research Questions, Central Questions and Supporting Hypotheses

This study examined the Double ABCX Family Stress, Adaptation, and Adjustment Model using two research questions.

Research Question One

RQ1: In what ways do family members perceive the family members' reentry following incarceration in order to draw upon their existing coping strategies, learn to deal with a new set of stress demands, and adapt?

Central question one. How did the notification of your loved one's upcoming release of your family member impact you personally and your family?

Central question two. In your family, how did the experience of having a family member reenter the family cause stress and how did you cope with the entry?

Central question three. What types of resources did you find useful in helping you cope with your family member's reentry?

Central questions four. What did you think and feel once your family member actually reentered your family?

Research Question Two

RQ 2: How do family members summarize their coping abilities and evaluate the adaptation of their family to the reentry of the ex-offender in terms of bonadaptation or maladaptation as described by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress?

Central question one. How would you summarize the adaptation of your family to the reentry of the family member who was incarcerated?

Hypothesis One (Research Question One)

Ho1: There will be no significant statistical relationship when the scores of family members on the *F-COPES* are compared by location of where the ex-offender lives, the length of time the family member provides support for the ex-offender, and the length of time (0-5 months, 6-11 months, 12-17 months, 18-24 months) since the reentry of the ex-offender.

Hypothesis Two (Research Question Two)

Ho2: There will be no significant statistical relationship when the scores of family members on the *FHI* are compared by location of where the ex-offender lives, the length of time the family member provides support for the ex-offender, and the length of time (0-5 months, 6-11 months, 12-17 months, 18-24 months) since the reentry of the ex-offender.

Definition of Terms

1. Adaptation—organizing coping behaviors to promote functionality after changes have occurred that improve the family system equilibrium (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982).
2. Bonadaptation—effective coping strategies that to overcome stressors despite the demands placed upon the individuals or families (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982).
3. Coping—the ability to draw on methods to assist with the demands of daily life (Day, Accock, Bahr & Arditti, 2005).
4. Ex-offender—an individual released from incarceration after serving a prison sentence (Petersillia, 2001).
5. Extended Family—family members not part of the immediate family, but related by blood, marriage, adoption (Benokratis, 2001).
6. Family—individuals identifying as family members who are related by blood, marriage, adoption and kinship (Benokratis, 2011).
7. Fictive Kin—individuals who carry out family members roles who are not related by blood, marriage or adoption (Benokratis, 2011).

8. Incarceration— involuntary imprisonment in the criminal justice system for a prescribed amount of time (Petersillia, 2001).
9. Maladaptation—the inability to overcome stressors (Lavee, McCubbin & Patterson, 1985).
10. Normative stressors—Usual occurrences/events that are anticipated, promoted and celebrated (Boss, 2003).
11. Non-normative stressors—Acute and unusual events that occur without expectation or warning that have the potential to have either a positive or negative effect (Boss, 2003).
12. Reintegration—The process of rejoining a group after periods of absences (McCubbin & Patterson, 1987).
13. Stress—events that present as challenges produced by upon daily activities (Boss, 2003).

Assumptions

1. The ex-offender reentry into the family causes stress whether these experiences are viewed as positive or negative.
2. Ex-offender reentry evokes an emotional response in family members faced with having a loved one return from incarceration.
3. Family members who participate in this study will be honest in their answers to describe how they draw on their personal resources to overcome the stress impacting the system.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study are as follows:

1. Participants in this study were adult family members providing assistance to an ex-offender family member
2. All participants were at least 21 years of age.
3. Participants have had an ex-offender family member who served a minimum of 2 year prison sentence.
4. Participants have had an ex-offender family member who has been released from prison a minimum of 6 months and/or longer following the incarceration.
5. The study included only participants from the North Texas area.

Summary

This chapter described the purpose for the study and explored the implications of ex-offender reentry for adult family members. There is very limited information available about this population, thus more research was needed in this area. The principal investigator gathered additional data about adult family member experiences with reentry as an avenue to showcase how families manage stressful demands placed upon the family system once the ex-offender returns. A second purpose of this study was to expand the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adaption and Adjustment to describe the experiences of family of ex-offenders upon reentry of the ex-offender into the family.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework under which this concurrent, mixed methods study was conducted and reviews the manner in which this study did fit into the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adaptation and Adjustment (Double ABCX Model) theoretical framework (McCubbin, & Patterson, 1983a). This chapter is divided into five parts: (1) theoretical framework discussing the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (2) a review of current literature discussing the ex-offender reentry process and associated stressors (3) the role of the adult family member after the ex-offender leaves confinement (4) implications of ex-offender reentry on adult family members; and (5) the coping strategies and adjustment process of family members as the ex-offender returns home.

The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress

Historical Background

All families experience stress to some degree whether the stress evoking event is seen as a joyful celebration as in the case of marriage, arrival of a new child or job promotion, or painful situation such as the loss of a family member, illness or financial difficulties (Boss, 2003). Family stress researchers began conducting studies in the 1930's on families contending with stressful events leading to family crisis. The Great Depression provided the pathway for family stress scholars such as Angell (1936) and Cavan and

Ranck (1938) to explore how families dealt with the loss of financial stability and the stressors associated with unemployment during a time when economic deprivation radiated throughout the family landscape (. These researchers found that the family's reaction to the sudden loss of income during the Great Depression was based on two things: integration and adaptability. Integration was defined as how unified a family feels and how economically interdependent they are; adaptability was defined as how flexible families were in talking about their problems, making a decision as a group, and modifying existing patterns, roles and rules (Hill, 1958).

Rueben Hill developed the first ABCX family stress model/theory in 1949 as a result of his work with military families and the hardship associated with deployments separations and reunions. He explored the implications of war-induced separations leading to crisis within the family. Hill's model denoted that families progress through four phrases when faced with a stressful situation: crisis, disorganization, recovery, and reorganization (Hill, 1949; White, 2005). The *crisis* phrase is the stress-evoking event that sent the family into an initial crisis. Once the family is faced with a crisis situation, a period of *disorganization* follows as family members attempt to cope with the situation. As families come to a resolution to overcome the crisis, they enter a stage of *recovery*, which can be either fairly quickly or be long term, depending on the nature and impact of the crisis and the family's ability to activate resources to combat the pressing crisis (White, 2005). When the family either recovers or fails to recover from the stressor impacting the family system, a period of *reorganization* takes place where family members function according to the

new demands placed on the family systems (White). Hill's (1949) original ABCX Model of family stress indicated that Factor *A* is the crisis event—such as the notification the of the incarcerated family release from imprisonment; the crisis event then interacts with Factor *B*—referred to as the resources available to the family (the family's crisis-meeting resources or coping strategies) and interacting with Factor *C*—the perception of the event—which lies within the family itself and seen in terms of the family's structures and values, beliefs; and Factor *X*, which indicates the degree of crisis resulting from the stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982). For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined the X-factor as the actual physical return of the ex-offender.

McCubbin and Patterson (1983a) added to Hill's original model by documenting how families adjust and adapt to stress once the crisis has stabilized. Their studies on how modern day military families deal with frequent deployments, reunions and rotations from one military installation to another, families coping with loss and despair, and stress related incidents that lead to family stress and crisis essentially offered an explanation as to how families experience crisis situations, adjust and adapt to the new changes brought on by the stressors (McCubbin & Patterson). Despite the family type, it was found that all families contend with a pile-up of stressors brought on by daily living activities and unexpected events that required adjustment in the manner families function (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a). It was also found that regardless of the stressor impacting the family, the members modify family roles, obtain new coping skills and adapt to a new way of living that is

necessary to bring the family system back to a state of equilibrium (McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, & Needle, 1980).

When changes occur within the family, the stressful event may be either a normative or non-normative stressor. McCubbin et al. (1980) pointed out that despite the family structure, most families deal with normative life events such as transition to parenthood, adjusting to widowhood, relocation, and institutionalization and adapting to retirement fairly routinely because these stressors are both expected and anticipated the family members have prepared for the changes brought on by these events (McCubbin, et al., 1980). Although many normative life events are perceived by families as joyful and celebrated, the changes produced by the events also produce stress.

Bernas and Major (2000) looked at normative stressors associated with work and family conflicts and resources used to alleviate stress. Normative stressors are events occurring in daily life that are often expected. These researchers focused on social resources such as friends, family resources and coworkers as well as personal resources such as hardiness (i.e. being committed to each role, having a personal sense of control over family roles and the ability to positively frame stressors as an opportunity for growth rather than an overwhelming obstacle). The results indicated that both types of resources positively impacted parents, particularly a mother's ability to balance work and family roles (Bernas & Major).

A study by Fredrikson and Scharlach (1999) looked at informal caregiving activities by applying family stress theory to the study of informal types of care provided by family

members dealing with physically ill or disabled family member. The illness and the disability factors were viewed as normative stressors in the study. Their research focused on the outcomes of working and caregiving at the same time and the stressor pileup that resulted from having multiple conflicting roles. It was found that the greater the intensity of the stressors such as job demands, degree of illness or accessibility to caregiving resources, the higher the level of stress and the greater potential for crisis (Fredrikson & Scharlach).

Non-normative stressors are those stress-provoking events that suddenly or gradually happen over time, making their occurrence unexpected. For instance, Wang and Amato (2000) studied how families adjust to divorce. The process of divorce in and of itself is stressful due to the amount of change impacting on the family system such as parent and child alternative living arrangements, adjustments in household income, caretaking routines and activities while adjusting to a new family formation (Wang & Amato). The findings in their study indicated that even though the divorce was expected by the couple their attempts to thrive under newly developed family patterns were identified as the most stressful challenges because the family was faced with new and unfamiliar experiences they did not expect to encounter. The findings also stipulated that regardless of the stress-related dynamics associated with divorce, the perception and attitude both partners held about the divorce and their available social resources were associated with their post-divorce adjustment (Wang & Amato).

Family Stress and Ex-offender Reentry

The return of the adult ex-offender can be a bittersweet reunion for the adults and children involved in the reentry process. Most ex-offenders and their adult family members commonly feel a sense of emotional bliss about the release from confinement, but studies on this population also shows that these feelings of happiness are also compounded by a host of challenging and stressful factors (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Sharpiro & Schwartz, 2001; Shollenberger, 2009). On one hand, the ex-offender worries about finding a place to live, locating employment, reestablishing parental roles, resurrect intimate relationships with spouses and partners and content with the label of a convicted felon, while trying to reestablish himself/herself into the family and community (Nasher & Visser, 2001; Visser & Travis, 2003). On the other hand, when family members are asked to support the unmet needs of the ex-offender, this burden appears to lead to additional strain on the family and disorganization in family function, which is also found to produce stress (Visser & Travis, 2003).

According the literature, *stress* is defined as events and/or activities impeding upon an individual's daily functioning that causes a deviation from the normal routine and disrupts the manner in which the family function (Boss, 2003; Hill, 1949; Lavee, McCubbin, & Olson, 1987; Malia, 2007; McCubbin & Patterson 1982; Mumuola, 2000; Travis, 2001). Deviations from normal routines are critical events that negatively or positively impact the family. As the ex-offender reenters the family, this disruption may or may not be unconsciously perceived as stress, but the manner as to which the adult family

perceives the event is highly contingent upon a number of factors such as length of incarceration, the emotional relationship between family members prior to incarceration and the degree to which family member remains in contact while the offender during incarceration (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Shollenberger, 2009).

The Double ABCX has not been applied to family members experiencing stress because they are experiencing the ex-offender reentry process. Thus, researchers know very little about family member's stressful experiences, the challenges of adjusting to having the ex-offender in the home and the underlying motivation that fosters adaptation to the newly redefined family roles, behaviors and patterns.

The Double ABCX model of family stress establishes a contextual framework for exploring the nature of stress and its implications of family function. The basic tenet of the model provides a starting point for researchers to gain a better understanding of how families interact, cope and overcome stressors brought on by changes in family circumstances that create family hardships. Even though the model needs to be used to explore family members and ex-offender reunions after periods of separation, the model has been widely used to explore military separations and reunions and the stressors associated when members of the military return to their family (Black, 1999; Blaisure, Arnold-Mann, 1992). Interestingly, many of the stressful experiences military family experience are very similar to family members of a returning ex-offender, but also very different based upon the reason that lead to the initial separation.

As the military service member returns from deployment, they are often viewed as heroes worthy of honor and praise for their service to the country (Blaisue & Arnold-Mann, 1992). An abundance of resources are readily available through civilian and military programs specifically designed to assist the military service member and their families with the process of readjusting to family. For the ex-offender, the perceptions of their return carry a negative undertone because the nature of the separation from family members is largely due to criminal behavior (Davies, 1980; Day, Acock, Bahr, & Arditti, 2005; LaVigne, Brooks & Shollenberger, 2007; Petersilla, 2001) When military families are reunited, there is often a period of ambivalence mixed with considerable relief and exhilaration, as families endure fundamental sources of stress such as changes in family life, residual effect from deployment such as PTSD, and other mental health issues (Gober & Moroney, 2005). For the returning ex-offender, the family reunion is overshadowed by strained relationships between the family members and the ex-offender and uncertainty that the ex-offender would suspend criminal behavior and conform to standards of social acceptability (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005). Both family types face intense stress brought on by redefining family roles, reorganizing family routines, assigning and fulfilling new responsibilities, managing financial disparities, circulate divisions of labor within the family (Gober & Moroney, 2005; McCubbin et. al, 1980; Shollenberger, 2006)

Scholars in criminal justice have provided a proliferation of research documenting ex-offender reentry efforts and challenges they face after release from imprisonment (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenerger, 2007; Martinez, 2006; Urban Institute, 2005;

Petersillia, 2001; Petersillia & Travis, 2001). Criminology literature has thoroughly documented ex-offender reentry as a stressful-event for those involved, but has not applied a scientific method examining stress-related factors or established a body of empirical evidence indicating the manner stress manifests in families contending with ex-offender reentry.

How the adult family members have lived through their unique and stressful experience, especially how the family members feel, cope, adjust or function once the ex-offender returns home has rarely been studied (Freudenberg, et al. 2005; LaVigne et al., 2004; Petersillia, 2001; Martinez, 2006; Oliver & Hairston, 2007). Professionals know very little about the normative and non-normative stressors impacting the family (Boss, 1980) once the ex-offender is released. The limited studies that have explored family and ex-offender reentry are commonly conducted within the scope of reducing ex-offender recidivism rates (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberg, 2007).

These studies generally focus on the plight of the ex-offender exclusively, overlooking the stress experienced by other adult family members and children. Through these few studies, scientists have learned that families of the ex-offenders face enormous stress-related challenges that adversely impact the entire family unit over extended periods of time beginning even before the incarceration of the family member. When the ex-offender returns home, both the ex-offender and the family members experience stress whether their return is perceived as positive or negative (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001).

These researchers lacked a scientific model for exploring the families of ex-offenders that would explain the experiences of family members when their loved one returned home after being released from prison. It is apparent that a systemic model is needed to conceptualize the ex-offender's reentry back into the family as a challenge for everyone involved with the family rather than continue to examine ex-offender reentry only from the offender's perspective (Naser & Visser, 2006; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001).

In this present study, the use of the Double ABCX Family Stress Model of Adaptation and Adjustment provided a broad scope by which to conceptualize family members' experiences with ex-offender reentry through identifying stress-related dynamics associated with this population from both a quantitative and qualitative approach. The Double ABCX model of family stress explains the phenomenon of families interacting with both normative and/or non-normative stressful events despite the family type (Black, 2001; Boss, 1980; Burr, 1949; Hill, 1937; Lavee, McCubbin & Patterson, 1985; McCubbin & McCubbin 1987; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983;). This theory has provided a practical foundation for exploring critical and stressful events that positively or negatively impeded upon the family such as job loss (Burr, 1949; Plummer & Hoch, 1986), death (Boss, 1982), divorce (Huang, 1991; McKerny & Price, 2005), family separation (Black, 2001) illness (Cobb, 1992) social dysfunction. This model is appropriate for application with ex-offender families.

The Modified Family Stress Theory (1987)

The Double ABCX Theory of Family Stress highlights stress-evoking events caused by changes in the family system and the process families undergo to overcome and adapt to stress-related challenges (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983a), which make it applicable to the process of ex-offender reentry given its explanatory power for describing the effects of change and the manner stress manifest in families. Unlike Hill's (1949) original model of family stress, the Double ABCX model of family stress extended the pre-crisis variables by adding post-crisis factors to explain how families manage after the stress-evoking event have ended. Below are the additional factors added to Hill's original model:

- (1) Pile-up of life stressors and strains prior to or following the stress-producing event, which results in a pile up of stressors,
- (2) The range of outcomes of family processes are used to respond to the pile-up of stressors (maladaptation to bonadaptation), and
- (3) The intervening factors that influence the course of adaptation such as family resources, coherence and meaning, and related coping strategies (Lavee, McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Four factors represent the “Double” in the ABCX model, and variability in the family's ability to recover, and adapt as follows:

1. *aA factors*—refers to the pile-up of family stressors, such as prior history of criminality over time, past and ongoing relationship strains between the ex-offender before and during incarceration,

2. *bB factors*—family efforts to acquire new resources based on prior success with overcoming stressful events, such as family members acquiring adaptive coping during the ex-offender absences that was learned from previous experiences with incarceration and reentry,
3. *cC factors*—refers to the family general point of reference to the overall situation, where modifications of definitions in perceptions of stress reflect a sense of acceptance and understanding of the situation which shapes the meaning the family gives to the total stress related experience, and
4. *xX factor*—Family adaptation, which is the outcome of the family process in response to the pile-up of stressors as a result of evoking coping strategies in an attempt to reduce stress impeding upon the family system (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1983).

Family members of ex-offenders struggle with the pile-up of hardships and strain, prior strains and co-occurring stressors indicative of the ex-offender's prior maladaptive behaviors affecting other family members, the offender's incarceration and his/her eventual reentry into the home (Nasher & Visser, 2006). When families experience stressful situations which demand change, the evaluation processes of the event appear to be more complex (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Many ex-offender families experiencing stressful situations change or readjust their established patterns of functioning, thus creating a different family situation that promotes either an effective or

ineffective way of functioning despite the stressors placed on them (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1983; McCubbin & Patterson, 1987).

Family adaptation is an ongoing process which includes adaptation that has been separated into maladaptation and bonadaption (Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985). According to Burr (1973), once family members adapt to the changes in family structure and function signifies that they have assessed the meaning of the event, activated effective resources to meet the stress-related demands and has returned to a state of routine functioning. The adaptation process is heavily influenced by perceived stressors or perceptions of the situation and the resources or coping strategies available to deal with stress (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

Maladaptation is the opposite end of the adaptation spectrum where the family experiences a continued imbalance between the pile-up of demands and the family capabilities for meeting those demands requiring changes in the family (Lavee, McCubbin , & Patterson, 1985, White, 2005). For instance, many families are unprepared to embrace the return of the ex-offender because they realize that the ex-offender brings a set of unmet needs that the adult family members may be unable to meet and sustain over time. Despite these challenges, adult family members do voluntarily/involuntarily offer support because adult ex-offenders have virtually no other means for obtaining support (Visher, Castro, & LaVigne, 2006). In doing so, this places additional hardship on the adult family members' current state of functioning and increases the likelihood that the adult family members will experience a greater degree of stress than usual (Latimore, 2004).

Bonadaption is the positive aspect of the adaptation process in that there is minimum discrepancy between the pile-up of stressors and the family capabilities to meet the demands placed on the family system and are further characterized by many family strengths and a sense of well-being (Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985). In spite of the changes brought on by ex-offender reentry, families contending with the bonadaption process already have an established sense of healthy functioning such as positive perceptions of the ex-offenders' return, financial stability where assisting the ex-offenders financially does not negatively impact the family financial means, and strong family ties to the ex-offender prior to and during incarceration and after release (Adalist-Erin, 1994). Obviously, these families possess the necessary resources to meet and overcome the stressors brought on by ex-offender reentry.

Review of the Literature on Ex-offender Reentry

Reentry Defined

The continuing growth of the prison population in the United States is a well-known fact. A growing number of people previously under confinement are being released into their communities after serving their prison terms (Travis, 2001). Ex-offender reentry is defined as the process of leaving confinement and returning to free society (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Petersilia, 2001; Visser & Latimore, 2008; Visser & Travis, 2003). At sentencing, individuals receive fixed terms that may be reduced for good behavior, but most adult offenders serve the majority of their sentences and are then

released at the end of their prison terms regardless if they have been rehabilitated or prepared for release (Henry, 2008; Petersilia, 2001).

According to the literature, ex-offender reentry is neither a legal standing nor a form of criminal status (Petersilia, 2001); rather, it is a rite of passage to freedom once the ex-offender pays his/her debt to society. Ex-offenders are generally released to the community where he/she last resided before going to prison; for some, their communities do not foster a sense of well-being and positive stewardship for their future as a lawful abiding citizen. Instead, the ex-offender may be surrounded by a criminal element that radiates throughout the communal terrain (Travis & Petersilia, 2001). The literature also confirms that a great deal of ex-offenders come communities plagued with economic deprivation, culturally isolated, inner city neighborhoods, and more often than not, these communities are where they return after release (Petersilia, 2001).

Description of the Ex-offender

Most people coming home from prison are men, although, women make up about 15 percent of the people being released and their numbers are growing steadily (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001). As a group, women coming home are generally young and old and have serious social and medical problems; they are more likely to have been convicted of drug offenses, and less likely to be violent offenders (La Vigne & Visser, 2006; Urban Institute, 2007). It has been reported that 70-85% of prisoners entering state correction facilities need substance abuse treatment and less than 13% percent actually receive treatment while in prison (Freudenberg, et al, 2005). Mental illness is also prevalent among those returning

from incarceration. A study conducted by Lovell & Jemelka (1998) evaluated 300 male and female prisoners concerning their coping abilities with mental disorders while confined in state prisons. The results revealed that the many prisoners suffer from major mental disorders and need psychiatric services that they did not receive in prison. These researchers concluded that it is likely these individuals will not receive mental health services after release (Lovell & Jemlka).

Graffam, Shinkfield, Lavelle and McPherson (2004) stipulate that the adult ex-offender commonly has a multitude of challenges and limited capabilities for overcoming the barriers brought on by the incarceration and reentry. When ex-offenders return to their families and communities, they commonly bring with them multiple issues such as substance abuse, lack of education, unemployment, and no entitlements to receive unemployment benefits (LaVigne, Travis, & Schollenger, 2003; Pager, 2003). Some ex-offenders are released to a lifestyle of homelessness where criminal activity serves as a means to sustain life. Various states have legal barriers that prevent ex-offenders with drug-related offenses from receiving public services and ban the ex-offender from obtaining public assistance such as food stamps or Medicaid or Medicare (Henderson & Hurly, 2005). In addition, limited housing assistance, and difficulty with obtaining state-issued identification and an inaccessible community-based social service delivery system are common challenges the ex-offender faces upon release (Wheeler & Patterson, 2008).

Needs of the Ex-offender and Identified Stressors

Since the number of people entering the criminal justice system has increased, the number of those being released from incarceration has increased as well over the last few years. Based upon this emerging trend, criminal justice scholars have shifted the scope of inquiry from focusing on factors that negatively impact the incarcerated offender and their families prior to and during incarceration, to addressing the challenges ex-offender's face after release from incarceration. High recidivism rates coupled with a growing number of first-time offenders, particularly women, have also provided the underlying motivation for scholars to begin conducting research studies examining the dynamics associated with ex-offender reentry into the mainstream population (Visser & Travis, 2003).

As the ex-offender returns home, housing, employment, education, medical care, mental health services, reestablishing family relationships, and financial needs have been identified as the most important needs to be addressed during the reentry process (Visser & Courtney, 2007). For the family that has struggled while the ex-offender is absent during incarceration, many barriers make it difficult for family members to resume supportive roles when the ex-offender returns (Schollenberger, 2007). These barriers can include new relationships, relocation, limited finances and feelings of resentment. In some research studies examining ex-offender reentry it was found that restoring parent-child bonds also presents as a challenge for the ex-offender (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005). New relationships may have formed in the ex-offender's absence where the children left behind established parent-child relationships with other caretakers serving in the role of the parent.

As the ex-offenders' return under these conditions, they may feel inadequate to step back into the role of the parent due to shame and guilt of leaving their children behind (LaVigne, Solomon, & Schollenberger, 2006). The lack of contact during imprisonment may have severed the parent-child relationship due to structural changes in the family that altered family relationships and lead to stressful interactions (Travis, et al. 2005). Feelings of shame and social stigma from the incarceration also create additional strains that may interfere with restoring the parent-child relationship (Martinez, 2006; Naser & Visser, 2006; Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005).

Several research studies have identified barriers that adversely influence successful reentry and present as stressors for ex-offenders. Visser and Lattimore (2008) conducted an in depth evaluation of Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative programs designed to offer a broad range of services for the soon-to-be released ex-offender. The evaluations consisted of interviews with an undisclosed number of incarcerated men, women, and adolescents participating in the SVORI national program (Visser & Latimore, 2008). The results of their evaluations identified essential needs and challenges the ex-offender face after release such as needing food, shelter, clothing, identification, transportation, and money management skills. Men with children reported needing parenting classes, childcare and assistance with regaining custody after release and child support payments (Visser & Lattimore, 2008). Health care needs with medical problems and psychological services for mental health and substance abuse challenges were also identified as primary needs of the returning ex-offender (Visser & Latimore).

Arditti and Few (2008) explored maternal distress for female ex-offenders as they reentered their family and community. The sample consisted of 10 mothers who conceptualized domestic violence, depression and substance as “triple threat” stressors. The author reported that maternal distress was linked to health challenges, dysfunctional intimate relationships, loss related to trauma, guilt and worry over their children and economic inadequacy.

In an additional study, Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins and Richie (2005) evaluated ex-offender experiences one year after release. The study consisted of a randomized sample of 491 adolescent males and 476 adult women returning home from New York City jails. The results indicated that both sample groups have low employment rates, low incomes, lack of education, high re-arrest rates and a general lack of coping strategies for dealing with the hardships caused by being an ex-felon; this same sample continued participation in drug use and illegal activities they considered necessary for basic survival. The participants reported mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and addictions. Women in the study reported becoming pregnant within one year after release and felt stressed because they had no means of taking care of themselves or supporting a child (Freudenberg, et al., 2005). Both women and the adolescents identified housing, substance abuse, inadequate incomes, unemployment, and lack of education and family problems as the primary sources for stress upon release (Freudenberg et al.).

Day, Bahr, Acock, and Arditti (2005) conducted a pilot study that focused on men returning home following incarceration and the family and community context in which the

return occurred. These researchers recruited 51 participants from Utah and Oregon criminal justice facilities who were anticipating release within a 3-6 month period. These researchers measured the amount of contact and relationship quality between inmates and their spouses/partners and children during incarceration. The conclusion indicated that continued contact during incarceration was positively correlated with the favorable reentry outcomes (Day et al., 2005).

Severance (2004) conducted a study examining reintegration concerns of 40 incarcerated women anticipating release from the Ohio Reformatory for Women. The results indicated that housing, employment, healthcare, substance and reconnecting with family members were the primary needs they identified as essential for a successful transition. The participants reported increased anxiety when anticipating a reconnection with their children and families, because they felt that their family members maintained negative perceptions that viewed them as a potential, unwanted burden (Severance).

These studies commonly did not address the family member's experiences with the return of the ex-offender. The researchers acknowledged that the families were supportive as they worked to help the ex-offender stay out of prison by providing emotional, financial and social support despite the amount of stress caused by the ex-offender reentry process (Visser & Lattimore, 2008). However, the researchers did not explore the challenges that family members face or the coping mechanisms for which they rely on during the ex-offender transition and adaptation processes.

The Role of the Family During Ex-offender Reentry

There has been an abundance of research exploring the challenges ex-offenders face upon release (LaVigne, Brooks, & Shollenberger, 2007; Martinez, 2006; Petersillia, 2001; Petersillia & Travis, 2001; Urban Institute, 2007). Limited research studies have been conducted to examine the role family members play during reentry and the manner that reentry impacts the family members themselves (Naser & Visser, 2006; Visser & Tavis, 2003). In many families, when a family member is faced with challenges that exceed their ability to manage or overcome the problem, family members come to the rescue helping those in need whether the family members provides a pro-social or antisocial influence (Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001). In some studies, a strong correlation has been identified showing a linkage between family support and post-release outcomes (LaVigne et al. 2004; Wilkinson, & Rhine, 2005;). Ex-offenders with strong family ties prior to and during incarceration have been found to transition successfully into their communities upon release. Those with strained family relationships have not been as successful and are more likely to be reconvicted (Naser & Visser, 2006).

Shollenberger (2009) conducted a study of family member's experiences with incarceration and reentry. The researcher collect data that drew from interviews of 427 family members that was also link to the larger return home study facilitated by the Urban Institute. Findings indicated that the renewing of family relationship was initially easy during the first few months, but researchers also reported a variety of difficulties associated with the ex-offender's return home over time.

The Urban Institute (2003) launched a nationwide, longitudinal study in Texas, Ohio, Maryland and Illinois coined the *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* study that examined the effects of incarceration and reentry on ex-offenders, family members and children. Referred to as *The Returning Home Study*, this is the first national, exploratory study to report reentry challenges from the lens of the ex-offender and family members (LaVigne et al., 2007). This study used a large sample size consisting of 4,373 men and women from all racial groups who were anticipating release within 3 months at the time the study was conducted. In each state, the principal researchers conducted follow-up interviews with the ex-offender and family members at both 3 and 6 month periods after release. One of the strengths of this study is that it was based in multiple geographical locations which strengthen the power of the common themes that were identified in the results of this sample. The results indicated that support of their families was significantly important in helping the ex-offender stay out of prison and avoid future participation in criminal activity (LaVigne et al). Most ex-offenders were found to leave prison with no savings, no employment and no housing of their own once they are released (LaVigne et al.). Family members often stepped in to provide housing support, at least initially or temporarily, until the ex-offender was able to stabilize and meet their own needs. (LaVigne et al.)

Nelson, Marta, Dees and Allen (1999) report that family acceptance and encouragement are related to successful post incarceration release. In their study of recently released ex-offenders in New York City, participants who demonstrated success in finding

employment, maintained abstinence from drug use and held positive attitudes were the ones that had family support and their families accepted them regardless of their maladaptive behavior that led to the incarceration. However, those ex-offenders with less accepting families fell back into using substances, lacked employment and continued participation in criminal activity (Nelson, Marta, Dees, & Allen).

Studies reinforced the findings that the ex-offender depends on the family members for support in helping them adjust to life outside of prison. Family members take on the role of “buffering agent” for the released ex-offender, offering an abundance of support to aid in the transition (Travis, 2001). Even though family members provided assistance to the ex-offender during reentry, their support also had far-reaching implications for the family members (Naser & LaVigne, 2006).

Implications of Ex-Offender Reentry on Family Members

Previous research studies examining the impact of ex-offender reentry have primarily focused on the effects on children whose parents are incarcerated (Naser & Visser, 2006). The studies report that the absence of the incarcerated parent creates emotional and financial strain for children, which has also been linked to poor school performance, inadequate development of social skills and increased juvenile participation in the criminal justice system (Adalist-Estrine, 1994; Fishman, 1983; Hairston, 2001). Few studies have examined the general experience of the family members’ experiences with incarceration and ex-offender reentry and the coping mechanism for which they rely.

It has been noted in the research literature that family members perceive the ex-offender's return as both a joyful celebration and a negative stressful event (Visher & Castro, 2006). On one hand, families of the ex-offender are happy that their family member is no longer incarcerated and their concern for the ex-offender's safety while incarcerated is significantly decreased after release (Naser & Visher, 2006). However, on the other hand, family members resent the return because they are suspicious that the ex-offender will continue participation in criminal activity based on prior patterns of behaviors that lead to the initial incarceration (Shollenberger, 2006). Another researcher found that the family members perceive the ex-offender as a liability with no means for self-sufficiency (Travis, 2001). In another study, family members felt bitterness despite their capabilities and willingness to help, because they would be involuntarily required to provide housing, assist with financial support, and help the adult ex-offender find employment (Martinez, 2006).

Oliver and Hairston (2007) conducted a study that explored the intersection between imprisonment, reentry and intimate partner violence with 31 African-American males. The study found that the 42% of participants had incidences of domestic violence with their romantic partner prior to and after the ex-offender returned home. The participants reported that due to episodes of domestic violence, they cut-off contact with the offender during the period of incarceration and felt apprehensive and fearful about the return of the ex-offenders (Oliver & Hairston, 2007).

Naser and Visher (2006) and other criminal justice scholars stipulate that for most ex-offenders, the relationship with family members is critical to their successful reentry

despite the possibility of strained and complicated family relations prior to and during incarceration. Scholars interested in ex-offender reentry have overwhelmingly documented the challenges that adversely impact successful reentry from the ex-offender's perspective. However, we know very little about how ex-offender reentry impacts the adult family members, the manner in which ex-offender reentry disrupts the family and, thus, producing stress, and, whether or not these families possess adequate coping strategies to contend with familial changes impacting the entire family system.

Family Members Coping and Adaptation Strategies

Boss (2003), Hill, (1949) and McCubbin and Patterson (1982) held the notion that changes in family leading to stress-provoking events disturb the family's equilibrium and required that positive coping strategies be employed for successful family function, for families to regain homeostasis and for families to remain organized in a stable fashion. When changes occur within the family unit, regardless of how substantial or insignificant they may be, it requires that the family members pool resources together to combat the new demands placed on the family. Determining whether or not these stressful events manifest into a crisis is largely dependent upon a few factors such as the meaning of the stressful event and its related hardships, the outcome of the stressor (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982).

A gap exists in the literature that fails to examine the formal or informal support networks, positive or negative coping mechanisms family members employ to help them deal with the strain, emotional problems and stressors associated with their roles as supportive family members to recently released ex-offenders (LaVigne, Visher, & Castro,

2004; Mumola, 2000; Sharp & Mendoza, 2001). All families experience some level of stress regardless of their structure or circumstances. Stress is common a family life experience whether the family respond to stressors in functional or dysfunctional ways. Families cope with stressful events in a familiar, predictable and systemic fashion (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Coping strategies are called upon and used to maintain equilibrium within the family unit as the changes impact upon the family system (Walsh, 1996).

Naser and LaVigne (2006) were among some of the first researchers to review reentry from the lens of the family members. They conducted a study that examined the family members' experiences with incarceration and adult ex-offender reentry. The study draws on the on the data from the *Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry Study*. The researchers' analyzed data collected in 2003 from 247 family members of recently released ex-offender returning to the Illinois area. The results indicated that family members maintained contact with their incarcerated family member while imprisoned through infrequent visitations, letter writing, and phone calls. Even though family members continued contact with the incarcerated family member to some degree, there were hardships on the family such as expensive telephones calls and challenges with finding and paying for transportation from the prison. It was also found that family members were willing provided financial and housing support, but in so doing so, was a difficult. A subsequent finding also indicted that some families feared that the ex-offender would resume old behavior patterns that may have led to the initial

incarceration such as drug use, criminal activity, which can be a significant source of stress for the family members. The researchers also noted that during difficult times or transition from prison back in to the community the family members relied on a variety of coping mechanisms to deal with their pressure and anxiety. This coping mechanism included the family turning to spirituality for a source of relief, relying on family friends or support groups within their churches. Very few family members were found using substances for coping and to ease their burden with supporting the ex-offender as they returned home (Nasher & Visser, 2006).

Ex-offender reentry can take a toll on family members regardless of their best intentions to assist the ex-offender with transition from prison to the community and family. As with most people, coping mechanisms are evoked to help overcome stressors impeding upon them. Effective coping mechanisms are highly dependent upon the nature of the stressors, the available resources and the manner the previous coping mechanisms have been found to be useful (Boss, 1980). Families are resilient and have the ability to assess their needs, meet their needs and continue functioning despite the stressful demands placed upon the system (Boss)

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to explore the implications that ex-offender reentry has on adult family members. The goal of this study is not to highlight family pathology, but to provide a detailed description of the challenges brought on by reentry and the manner in which these families deal with the challenges brought by ex-offender reentry. Evaluating family members' experiences with stressful challenges

expands our understanding of how and why some families overcome stressors and maintain a sense of health well-being and shed light on families contending with similar stressors may not be as successful. This study provides a starting point for family practitioners to better understand how these families function during ex-offender reentry and to establish a contextual framework for developing effective interventions that promote health family function as the adult family members undergo changes to the family system once the ex-offender returns.

In this chapter, the principal researcher provided a theoretical framework for family stress and explored how families contend with stressful experiences brought on by the ex-offender coming home after release. A review of the literature discussed current research trends that highlight both the plight of the ex-offender and the implications of their return on the family members. Based on the evidence provided, more research is needed that explores how the ex-offender's reentry affects the stress, adjustment and adaptation of the family. The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress was used to evaluate how families deal with the stress of ex-offender reentry into the family; study results are used to increase policy makers practitioner's understanding of how families deal with their stress and begin developing an empirical foundation that will inform future practices and interventions that are necessary to increase family wellness.

Summary

In this chapter, the principal researcher provide a theoretical framework of family stress to explore how families content with stressful experiences brought on by the ex-

offender home coming after release. A review of the literature discussed current research trends that highlight both ex-offender challenges and the implications of their return on the family. Based on the evidence provided, more research on ex-offender reentry and the implications on the family are needed as way to increase practitioners understanding of the families under duress brought on the ex-offender's return.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Limited research studies have documented the experiences of adult family members when ex-offenders reenter the family. No one has examined how the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress can be used to understand how family members manage their stress once the ex-offender returns. Using a mixed method approach to this issue would require the researcher to make both a broad and narrow analysis of the dynamics associated with this population (Creswell, 2003). In order to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the impact that the release of the ex-offender has on families, a concurrent, mixed methods approach was used, which is often referred to as the “third type” research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This approach combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which meets the scientific standard of confirming the phenomenon explored (Creswell, 2004).

Research Design

The concurrent mixed methods research design used in this study followed the process outlined in the Double ABCX Family Stress, Adaptation and Adjustment Model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). The qualitative inquiry suggested by this researcher focused on the Double ABCX Model pre-crisis and post crisis factors. The pre-crisis factors are as follows: a-factor—the stressor (the notification of the ex-offender return), b-factor—existing resources (the resources family members evoke to overcome and/or

manage the stressors), and C factor—adult family members’ perceptions of the stressor, and X-factor—the crisis (the ex-offender release and physical return to the family). The post crisis factors include aA factor—pile up of demands, bB factor-analysis of adaptive resources used to combat previous stressors, cC factor—the coherence of the stressors, and xX factor—the compilation of the A, B and C factors that determines the degree to which adult family members adapt to the demands that require change over time.

The quantitative inquiry in this study was gathered concurrently at the end of the qualitative interviews. Sample participants completed both the F-COPES and FHI to evaluate coping capabilities and adaptation as outlined in the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress. Each instrument took approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

Sampling Procedures

The principal researcher used criterion and snowball sampling methods to recruit participants that had experienced the reentry of a family member after being incarcerated and who fit the study criteria for participation. According to Creswell (2007), criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon to some degree. The snow ball sampling method allowed the researcher to locate participants who knew other participants that met the eligibility requirements for the study (Creswell). All participants interested in participation completed a Participation Contact Information Form (Appendix A). This participation form included questions that asked for contact information and eligibility questions. The researcher did collect and

evaluate the participant's responses to this form to be sure that all respondents met the study criteria.

The sample participants for the study consisted of 23 adult family members who were at least 21 years of age and were currently assisting an ex-offender family member (at the time of the interview) who had been released within a time frame of 6 months to 2 years. For the purpose of this study, the family members were characterized as family members providing support to the ex-offender in the form of housing, financial support, educational support, emotional support, mental and medical support, transportation, spiritual/religious and parenting support and related by blood, or marriage or any other person as identified as a family member of an ex-offender (see Appendix B).

In order to gain access to family members of ex-offenders, the researcher contacted faith-based support groups, gatekeepers at colleges and universities and various community-based organizations in person, by telephone, mail and e-mail. Flyers were disseminated to community organization to promoted participation (see Appendix C). The principal researcher attended and presented an overview of the study and passed out recruitment letters to community members participating in the local, faith-based support group meeting designed for the family members of the incarcerated and recently released ex-offenders (see Appendix D for recruitment letter). The principal researcher met with deans and department chairs from local community colleges and universities as way to gain access to the student body; at least one example of a letter of cooperation is available in Appendix L for review.

Data Collection

The principal researcher used a concurrent research strategy as the primary data collection process to gather both quantitative and qualitative data at one time during one data collection phrase (Creswell, 2003). Once the participants signed and returned the consent forms (see Appendix E), this researcher scheduled a 1 hour 45-minute interview appointment with each family member (see Appendix F for interview prompts, see Appendix G). After the initial interview, the researcher learned to allow the participants to tell their story in their own way in response to interview questions and this change led to a shorter interview time. Each participant completed the two quantitative instruments at the end of the interview. Per the agreement, each individual was paid \$20 and told that they would be asked to participate in member checking of the data.

Qualitative Data Collection

The qualitative data collection involved the researcher asking participants interview questions pertaining to the factors of Double ABCX Model of family stress. The researcher approached the interviews with specific questions to explore, but remained open to pursue topics the participants discussed relative to their personal experiences with ex-offender reentry. The participants' perspectives on the reentry of their family member unfolded as they viewed it, not as the researcher viewed it (see appendix H for participant responses). Thus, the researcher's role was to capture that unfolding as it occurred (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Creswell (2007), the researcher is a key instrument in the qualitative data collection as many qualitative researchers personally collect data using an interview

protocol to guide the interview process. Interviews call for a “*conversational partnership*” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 11) where both the researcher and participants enter into conversational collaborations to gain a better understanding of the shared meanings under analysis.

The qualitative portion of this mixed-methods research study consisted of two sets of open ended questions. The first set of four questions addressed the pre-crisis section of the Double ABCX Family Stress Model by asking the participant to discuss their experience pertaining to the initial notification the ex-offender’s anticipated release (see appendix I). The second set of four questions addressed the crisis and post-crisis section of the Model by asking participants to report on their experience having their family member reenter their family. The final set consisted of one question concerning the perceived adaptation of the family to the re-entry of the ex-offender. All qualitative questions were asked at the beginning of the interview over a period of 60 minutes. The last 45 minutes of the interview consisted of participants completing the two quantitative instruments (see Appendix J).

Reflections of the Researcher

Reflexivity in qualitative research involves the awareness of the ways the researcher, as an instrument, with specific beliefs, values, morals and experiences may have an impact on the research process (Rossman & Rallis 2003). Throughout this research process, my main goal was to understand, perceive, capture, and organize, the participant’s experience through my subjective interpretations that accurately reflect the experiences of

the participants. This was difficult undertaking for me as a researcher because I also have personal experiences of being a family member with an ex-offender family member who returned to the family after a period of incarceration. I found it somewhat difficult to suspend my personal judgments and beliefs and to be open to hear the voice of the participants through their experiences without allowing my personal experiences to bias my understanding of the participant's experience. I recognize this threat to the research study early on which leads me to draw on my major chair professor and peer reviewer's perceptions, interpretation, and understanding of the information captured to ensure I accurately reflected the experiences of the participants in this study. After completing the data collection and analysis, I was pleased to learn that although I shared similar experiences with the participants in this study, the findings revealed distinct differences amongst the participants experiences and my personal experiences. At this point, I felt affirmed that I efficiently bracketed my experiences to allow the participants voices to be actually portrayed in this research study.

Face to Face Interviews

The researcher used semi-structured, open interviews with family members of ex-offenders to explore their experiences with ex-offender reentry. Interviews were conducted face-to-face for 1 hour and 45 minutes and audio recorded. Interviews were held at the participants' homes, community library and the participants' work sites Recorded data was collected. Prior to the interviews, the researcher provided each participant with a research packet consisting of consent forms, demographic questionnaire, research

instruments and \$20.00 dollars for participant's participation. (Appendix A). The consent form follows the TWU Institutional Review Board requirements.

Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative data collection portion of this study entailed participants completing two quantitative instruments to capture family member's coping abilities and the factors associated with adapting to the changes brought on by ex-offender reentry. These instruments included the Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales (F-COPES) (McCubbin, Olson, & Larsen, 1991) and the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) (McCubbin, McCubbin, & Thompson, 1986). The F-COPES identifies problem solving and behavior strategies that family members utilize to cope during problem situations (McCubbin et al., 1996). This scale integrates the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress factors of pile-up of demands, family resources, and meaning/perceptions. The Family Hardiness Index (FHI) measures hardiness as both stress resistance and adaption resources in families that function as a buffer in mediating the impact of stressors and demands and facilitation of adaption over time (McCubbin et al., 1986). McCubbin, McCubbin, and Thompson (1986) refer to hardiness "as the internal strengths and sturdiness of the family unit and characterized by a sense of control over the outcomes of life events and hardships, a view of change as beneficial and growth producing, and an active rather than passive orientation in adjusting to and managing stress situations" (McCubbin, McCubbin, & Thompson, 1986, p. 239).

Research Questions and Supporting Hypothesis

This study examined the Double ABCX Family Stress, Adaptation, and Adjustment Model using two research questions.

Research Question One

In what ways do family members perceive the family members' reentry following incarceration in order to draw upon their existing coping strategies, learn to deal with a new set of stress demands, and adapt?

- 1) How did the notification of your loved one's upcoming release of your family member impact you personally and your family?
- 2) In your family, how did the experience of having a family member reenter the family cause stress and how did you cope with the entry?
- 3) What types of resources did you find useful in helping you cope with your family member's reentry?
- 4) What did you think and feel once your family member actually reentered your family?

Research Question Two

How do family members summarize their coping abilities and evaluate the adaptation of their family to the reentry of the ex-offender in terms of bonadaptation or maladaptation as described by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress?

Central questions one. How would you summarize the adaptation of your family to the reentry of the family member who was incarcerated?

Hypothesis One

Ho1: There will be no significant statistical relationship when the scores of family members on the *F-COPES* are compared by location of where the ex-offender lives, the length of time the family member provides support for the ex-offender, and the length of time (0-5 months, 6-11 months, 12-17 months, 18-24 months) since the reentry of the ex-offender.

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There will be no significant statistical relationship when the scores of family members on the *FHI* are compared by location of where the ex-offender lives, the length of time the family member provides support for the ex-offender, and the length of time (0-5 months, 6-11 months, 12-17 months, 18-24 months) since the reentry of the ex-offender.

Quantitative Measurements and Instruments

The quantitative measurements and instruments for this mixed methods study include the *Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scale* (F-COPES) and the *Family Hardiness Index* (FHI). The F-COPES is designed to explore family coping patterns in light of a problem situation (McCubbin, McCubbin, & Thompson, 1986), as in the case of “ex-offender reentry”. The F-COPES is a 30-item instrument with 8 scales divided into two

dimensions—internal and external family coping patterns. The overall reliability for the entire instruments is $r=.77$ (McCubbin, et al., 1986).

The Family Hardiness Index (FHI) is a 20-item instrument that accesses the degree to which the family member describes their current family situation concerning commitment, challenge and control (McCubbin et al., 1986). The overall internal reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for FHI is $r=.82$.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

In this study, the research used content analysis to examine, quantify, and make inferences about the family members' experiences with ex-offender reentry according to the factors presented in the Double ABCX Model of family stress (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher read and re-read and transcribed of all transcripts into text. The text was then coded and broken down into manageable categories and eventually grouping the meanings into sub-factors on the model (Rossman, Rallis, 2003). The analysis of interview transcripts was based on an inductive approach geared towards identifying patterns of the sub-factors as they emerge from the content analysis process (Creswell, 2007).

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Trustworthiness and authenticity signify that the research conducted meets the need of realistic discovery, while at the same time, satisfying the scientific requirements of confirming the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Denison, 2003). In qualitative research, Creswell (2007) indicate that trustworthiness is based on both internal

and external validity of the research design, the objectivity of the scientific procedures, and the reliability and validity of the measures (Creswell, 2007). For qualitative studies, trustworthiness is measured and evaluated based on standards of credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability (Guba, 1981). To establish trustworthiness and authenticity for the qualitative section of this study, the researcher worked with her academic advisor to confirm the fit of the data to the factors (themes) of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress. The researcher achieved authenticity through the activities of fairness (Creswell, 2007).

Credibility

Credibility is one essential component of trustworthiness and refers to the extent to which one can be confident that the research findings reported are true, accurately representing the individuals and the phenomena under analysis (Creswell, 2007). The researcher for this study employed triangulation as a method to achieve credibility. Triangulation involves the use of multiple techniques and approaches to provide corroborating evidence that the phenomenon explored has effectively addressed and represented in the exploration processes (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher used triangulation by means of three strategies. First, conducted open dialogue with professional colleagues interested in this population, who have a general understanding of the dynamics of ex-offender reentry and its implications on others. Secondly, the researcher compared findings from this research study to current related research literature on the topic. Lastly, the researcher used member checks which involved three study participants reviewing the

research findings to ensure the researcher accurately captured experiences of the participants.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the consistency of data across various population groups with similar conditions. The essential function of dependability implies that the results of study would remain consistent providing that the study contained similar participants and conducted under similar contexts (Creswell, 2007).

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree in which the findings produced by a research study can be generalized to the larger populations. The researcher used rich and thick descriptions in order to make the respondents' experiences appear "real" for the readers of this research study (Creswell, 2007).

Conformability

Conformability is another component to achieve trustworthiness. Conformability refers to the degree to which findings are the result of the scientific exploration process and not attribute to other non-scientific factors (Creswell, 2007). Peer reviews have been found to help obtain credibility. Peer reviewers are those individuals who play role of the objector, attempting to review the data from a different perspective. The peer's goal is to expand the researcher's conceptualization of the phenomena to ensure a rich, thick description can be obtained. For the purpose of this study, the peer reviewer for this research was the professor serving as a dissertation committee chair.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The principal researcher used a linear regression statistical test to examine the relationship between the scores on both the F-COPES and the FHI on the two hypotheses including the independent variables a listed.

Protection of Human Subjects

The principal investigator followed and upheld standards for protecting human subjects as defined by Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board. The researcher remained aware that the investigator takes full responsibility to ensure protection of human participants from physical and emotional discomfort, harm, or danger. Considerable caution was taken to ensure participants understand and sign the consent forms for participation. Confidentiality and anonymity was protected during this study by assigning a number to each respondent's file instead of listing personal names. All written materials, confidential information and computerized data will be kept stored in secured and locked filing cabinet behind two locks. The stored information was available to the researcher, major dissertation advisor and committee members. The investigator will keep the information up to 7 years after the completion of the study. After this timeframe has elapsed the principal researcher plans to shred the information.

Timeline

The time-line for this study was up to two years after the researcher received approval from Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board. The researcher conducted the research study as efficiently as necessary without jeopardizing the integrity

of the study. A summary of the findings from the study research will be made available to participants within three months after the dissertation has been completed. The summary will be written at a level that is compatible with the reading levels of the research participants.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the body of literature on ex-offender reentry. Since little is known about ex-offender reentry and its impact on family members, this research offered an expanded viewpoint that looks at the effects of the ex-offender's homecoming and associated challenges as a systemic experience which includes examining the event from the family member's perspective under the Double ABCX Model of family stress theory. The goal of this study is to shed light on the challenges that both ex-offender and their family members face when dealing with reentry. In doing so, this study helps practitioners, scholars, and policy makers interested in ex-offenders and their family members devise programs, services, policy and practices that better suit the needs of those impacted by this phenomenon.

The Role of the Researcher

The principal investigator of this study is an African American female, wife, mother, faculty member, graduate teaching assistant, civic participant, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor Intern (LCDCI), Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) and doctoral candidate in the Family Studies program at Texas Woman's University. The principal investigator participates in a host of

civic activities that include: board member with Texas Council of Family Relations, committee member with Dallas County Ex-offender Reentry Initiative, and committee member with Oak Cliff Community Action Program.

The principal investigator was interested in exploring the implications of ex-offender reentry on adult family members. The principal investigator has firsthand experience with a family member's participation in the criminal justice system and reentry into the family system after release. Despite the personal experience with these phenomena, the principal investigator bracketed the experiences by suspending personal judgments to allow for rich, thick descriptions to emerge from the population under study and restrain from making personal inferences based upon a subjective interpretation of past experiences. Creswell (2003) indicated that the researcher's role is to gain insight into the phenomena as the mode for accurately assessing and describing the dynamics adult family members encounter stemming from ex-offender entry.

Summary

This concurrent mixed methods research study was designed to explore the implication of ex-offender reentry on family members. This study was guided by the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress. The researcher employed a concurrent research strategy that entails data collection using multiple methods during the 1 hour and 45 minutes interview with the participants. Semi-structured interviews were the primary format to collect qualitative data; the quantitative data, scores on the F-COPES and FHI, was gathered at the end of the interview. This researcher followed all of the guidelines for

academic research that is required by the TWU IRB; the participants in the study will be notified of the findings within three months of the dissertation defense.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

This concurrent, mixed methods study explored the implications of ex-offender reentry on family members from the family member's perspective. The researcher used a content analysis process, which included an analysis of in-depth, face-to-face interviews that were used to capture the family members' similar experiences of having a loved one return to the family after being released from incarceration (Rossman & Falls, 2003), followed by the process of transcribing the data into text, analyzing the text for merging sub-factors, and then making inferences about the participants experiences as applied to the model. The Double ABCX Family Stress Model of Adjustment and Adaptation (McCubbin, 1983) was used as the scientific lens for this study to determine how family members report their experience of stress related factors associated with the ex-offender's return to the family. This chapter includes four main pieces of information: the description of the sample participants that includes the family relationship groups identified in the study; a qualitative data analysis of the fit between the reported experiences of the sample participants with the factors included in McCubbin's Double ABCX Model; and the significant quantitative findings when participant scores on the Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scale (F-COPES) and the Family Hardiness Index (FHI) were compared.

Description of the Sample

The sample of 23 participants met the eligibility criteria for this study that required all participants to have had a personal experience with an ex-offender family member who either returned to their home or returned to a different location other than the participant after release from incarceration. Additional criteria stated that participants must have also provided support to the ex-offender from 5 of the 10 support categories identified by the researcher from a research-based list of common types of support family members provide ex-offenders upon their release from incarceration (Lavee, 1998; Travis, 2003). All sample participants lived within the Dallas, Texas Metropolitan area. Tables 1-4 provide demographic information about the sample.

The 23 participants listed in Table 1 were assigned to four relationship groups based on the type of relationship the family members have with the ex-offenders: spouses (n=6), parents (n=7), siblings (n=7), and adult children (n=3). The sample was made up of 16 females and 7 males. The participant's ages ranged from 21-60 years; of this group, two of the participants were 21-40 years and 21 were 41-60 years. When marital status was considered, 17 participants were married, 6 were single. African Americans (n=16, 69%) were the largest cultural group in this study, followed by Caucasians-Americans (n=4) and Hispanic-Americans (n=3). Income levels varied with 16 participants reported a household income up to \$100,000/year, while 7 reported over 100,000 per year. A description of the demographic factors for the sample is list in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample by Family Relationships

Relationship Type	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Parents (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Age				
21—40 years	1			1
41-60 years	5	7	7	2
Gender				
Females	4	6	4	2
Males	2	1	3	1
Ethnicity				
Black	4	5	7	
White	1	2		1
Hispanic	1			2
Marital Status				
Married	5	4	6	1
Single	1	2	1	2
Income				
\$0-99,999 K /yr	5	4	4	3
\$100K-\$200K/yr	1	3	3	

Participants completed questionnaires that provided additional information, such as their particular types of participant/ex-offender relationship configuration, what types of support were provided to the ex-offender, the length of time that participants offered support to the ex-offender, and the residence location of the ex-offender's return. Eleven

types of relationship configurations were reported in this sample (see Table 2) as follows: wives/ex-offender husbands (n=4), husbands/ex-offender wives (n=2), mothers/ ex-offender sons (n=4), mothers/ex-offender daughters (2), father/one ex-offender son (n=1), brothers/ex-offender brothers (n=3); sisters/ex-offender brothers (n=3), sister/ex-offender sister (n=1), daughter/ex-offender mother (n=1), daughter/ ex-offender father (n=1), and son/ex-offender father (n=1).

Table 2

Relationship Configurations by Family Relationship Groups

Participant/Ex-offender	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Wife/Husband	4			
Husband/wife	2			
Mother/son		4		
Mother/ daughter		2		
Father/son		1		
Brother/brother			3	
Sister/brother			3	
Sister/sister			1	
Daughter/mother				1
Daughter/father				1
Son/father				1

Data on specific supportive activities that participants offered ex-offenders after their release was gathered from participant information provided on both the research project screening instrument and during the face to face qualitative interview. The types and frequencies of the most common supportive activities the participants provided to the

ex-offenders are listed in Table 3. The supportive activities provided by the family members included the following types: financial support, housing assistance, educational support, employment guidance, medical and mental health support, spiritual/religious support, childcare, and transportation support. Among the four types of relationship configuration groups, family members reported providing support to their ex-offender family member in both similar and different ways.

All family member participants (n=23), regardless of relationship, reported providing *financial support* to the ex-offender. More spouses were more likely to report providing housing to ex-offenders after their release from prison, followed by of the parents, siblings and the adult children. All three relationship groups, spouses, parents, and siblings, provided *spiritual/religious* support, while the adult children were less likely to provide that support. All family members in both the spouses and adult children groups reported *providing transportation support*, while parents and sibling groups were less likely to have provided that support. All of three relationship groups, spouses, parents, and siblings, provided *mental health support*, while adult children were less likely group to have provided that support. *Employment support* varied among the four relationship groups. Spouses, parents, and siblings reported providing employment support while limited adult children offered support. Very few spouses, parents, and adult children provided *Education support*, siblings reported more likely to offer this type of support. Finally, *Medical support* varied among the four relationship groups. More siblings

provided medical support, while the spouses, parents and adult children reported less likely to provide medical support, while.

Table 3

Supportive Activities Participant Provided to the Ex-offender

Types of Support Provided & Frequencies #	Spouse (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Financial	6	7	7	3
Housing	6	6	4	2
Spiritual/Religious	6	7	7	2
Transportation	6	6	5	3
Mental Health	6	7	7	2
Childcare	4	5	3	
Employment	3	3	5	1
Education	1	1	3	2
Medical	1	3	1	2

The principal researchers also collected descriptive data representing the length of time participants provided support to the ex-offender and the location where the ex-offender returned after incarceration (Table 4). The length of time participants provided support fell into 3 time interval categories ranging from 6 to 24+ months. More spouses provided supported within 12-17 months after the ex-offender's release, while most parents reported providing support from 18-23+ months. Most of the participants in the sibling group provided support to the ex-offender from 6-11, while adult children were more likely to support the ex-offender after release from 6-12 months.

Table 4

Description of the Length of Time Participants Provided Support to the Ex-offender After Release from Incarceration

Length of Time Providing Support	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
6—11 months	2	2	3	2
12—17months	3	2	2	0
18—23 months	1	3	2	1

Results

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative methodology in this study used interview questions to capture the participants' experiences relative to each of the factors of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress (McCubbin et al., 1982). A content analysis of the participant responses to the interview questions was conducted to explore the participants experiences and to categories these experiences according to the factors of the model. A brief overview of this model as it applied to this study is presented below in order to ensure the reader has a holistic understanding of the model. Two key factors within the Double ABCX Model, factors A and X, represent the two independent variables: stress experienced by the family member upon notification of offender release and stress experienced by family member following the ex-offender's return home. This overview will be followed by a presentation

of the qualitative findings for these factors of the Double ABCX model: b-factor, c-factor, aA-factor, bB factor, and cC factor.

Overview of the Double ABCX Model as Applied in This Study

- The *a-factor* represents the stress-provoking event defined in this study as the experience of the family member upon receiving initial notification of the ex-offender's scheduled release. For the purpose of this study, the *A-factor* is accepted as the trigger event that initiates the particular stress experienced by the family member upon learning of the offender's upcoming release. No other specific data were collected concerning the initial notification *a-factor*, also it is not included in the qualitative data analysis below.
- The *b-factor* indicates the family member's appraisal of available resources to combat the stressor (a-factor). In this study, the participants identified three categories of available resources: personal resources, family resources, and social, community, and government resources.
- The *c-factor* involves the perception of the family members concerning the ex-offender's upcoming release. The qualitative data in this study yielded three broad categories: positive perceptions of the event, negative perceptions of the event, perceptions of the family as reported by the participant.
- The *x-factor* represents the actual physical return of the ex-offender to either the participant's home or to reside with another family member at a different location.

The a-factor above was accepted as the trigger for the stress experienced by the family member that was generated by the notification of return of the ex-offender. As will be described below, data related to factors aA, bB and cC indicate how the level of stress experienced by the family members becomes intensified once the ex-offender returns. The following Double ABCX factors are associated with the ex-offender's return to the family after release.

- The *aA-factor* includes the pileup of stressors over time associated with the ex-offender's return.
- The *bB-factor* is defined as the appraisal and/of new or existing resources to decrease additional stress caused by the ex-offender's return.
- The *cC-factor* is defined as coherence indicating the degree as to which the family members understand the nature of the stressor having an impact on their personal well-being. *Data analysis also assessed coping skills and the degree to which family adapt to the ex-offender's return.*

b-Factor: Appraisal of available resources. The existing Available Resources participants commonly drew upon when they became aware of the release of the ex-offender fell into three different categories: 1) Personal Resources, 2) Family Resources, and 3) Social, Community, and Government Resources. The high number of responses provided by family members when asked about their Personal Resources led to that category being divided into three subcategories: External Resources, Internal Qualities, and Maladaptive Behavior Patterns. Family member similarities in both External Resources

and Internal Qualities will be discussed below in Table 5. Family members reported a number of differences in Internal Qualities (only) in Table 6. Family and family member Maladaptive Behavior Patterns are discussed in Table 7.

Personal resources: Family member external resources. For all family members in the spouses, parents, siblings, and adult children groups, four common external resources were utilized to assist with meeting the demands of the stressor brought on by anticipating their loved one's return from incarceration: employment, homeownership, financial stability, and transportation.

Personal resources: Similarities in family member internal qualities. The four family member relationship groups reported drawing upon the following similar internal qualities when they were notified that the offender was being released: spirituality, altruism, compassion, forgiveness, patient, self-reliant, resilient, optimism, supportive, loyal/committed to the ex-offender, knowledge about the predicted challenges ex-offender face after incarceration and a strong sense of family togetherness. A list of both External Resources and Internal Qualities is included in Table 5.

Table 5

b-Factor: Available Resources – External Resources and Internal Qualities

<u>External Resources</u>	<u>Internal Qualities</u>
Employment	Spirituality
Homeownership	Compassionate
Financial stability	Forgiving
Transportation	Loyal
	Independent
	Altruistic
	Patient
	Supportive
	Optimistic
	Resilient
	Knowledgeable
	High regard for family togetherness

Personal resources: Differences in family member internal qualities. Results from this study also revealed that group members had different Internal Qualities they perceived as Available Resources. Most spouses reported remaining faithful to the ex-offender spouse during the incarceration and after release. Establishing concrete boundaries with the ex-offender was conveyed as an internal quality and reported by all of the siblings, most of the parents, and some of the adult children. Most parents but fewer siblings and adult children reported holding the ex-offender accountable for continued participation in maladaptive behavior. Having a positive attitude towards the ex-offender

was reported as an internal quality by members of the four relationship groups but more siblings, parents, and spouses than adult children. A description of these differences in internal qualities is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

b-Factor: Available Personal Resources – Internal Qualities

Internal Qualities	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Remained Faithful	5			
Established concrete Boundaries		6	7	1
Anticipate Holding ex-offender accountable		5	2	1
Positive Attitude towards ex-offender	4	4	5	1

Personal resources: Family member maladaptive behavior patterns. Family members in all four groups reported using Existing Resources in an excessive or negative way which led to the development of Maladaptive Behavior Patterns. Increased food consumption became a maladaptive behavior pattern as reported by more than half of the parents, siblings, and adult children, and nearly all of the spouses. Increased smoking was reported by more than half of all respondents with spouses and siblings reporting the highest increase and parents and adult children slightly less. At nearly identical rates, a

majority of all relationship groups reported an increase in drugs and alcohol use.

Overspending was also identified as a maladaptive resource pattern by most spouses, siblings, and adult children and over half of the parents. Gambling was also reported as a maladaptive behavior pattern by most spouses but only half of the siblings and a small number of parents and adult children. Adopting an attitude of aloofness towards others was reported as a maladaptive behavior pattern by only about half of the respondents in all relationship groups. A description of the b-factor Maladaptive Behavior Patterns is presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7

b-Factor: Available Personal Resources – Maladaptive Behavior Patterns

Maladaptive behaviors by frequencies #	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Increased food consumption	5	5	5	2
Increased cigarette smoking	4	4	5	2
Increased substance use	4	5	4	2
Overspending	5	4	5	2
Gambling	5	2	4	1
Isolation/withdrawal	2	4	0	0
Aloofness	5	4	3	2

Extended family resources. Resources within the nuclear family were identified as the second category of available resources participants relied on after they were notified that the offender was going to be released. Participants in the study identified the following Family Resources: family communication, family emotional support, family spiritual support, family financial resources, family collaboration and family resourcefulness. Family communication was reported as a resource by a majority of parents, siblings, and adult children but not by spouses. Family emotional support was reported as a resource by most siblings and over half of all the spouses, parents, and adult children. Approximately two out of three spouses, parents and siblings reported family spirituality as a family resource. Having family financial resources as an available resource was reported by nearly all siblings but slightly more than half of the spouses, parents, and adult children. Family collaboration was reported as an available resource by most siblings, many parents, about half of the spouses, and only a few adult children. Family resourcefulness was reported by most parents and siblings but only about half of the spouses and a few of the adult children. A description of the Family Resources by group is listed in Table 8.

Table 8

b-Factor: Available Extended Family Resources

Family Resources	Spouse (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Family communication	2	2	5	1
Family emotional support	4	4	6	2
Family spirituality	4	4	5	2
Family financial support	4	4	5	2
Family collaboration/cohesion	3	5	6	2
Family resourcefulness	3	6	5	1

Social, community, and government resources. Participants reported Social, Community, and Government resources as available resources they found useful in helping them overcome the stressors brought on by anticipating the ex-offender's return from incarceration. The Social Resources identified by the participants included friends and church members. Friends were identified as Social Resources by all of the spouses, more than half of both the parents and siblings groups, and one adult child. Church members were identified as Social Resources by most spouses, siblings, and adult children but only about half of the parents.

Community Resources were identified by the participants as faith-based organizations, community support groups, and school and transition programs designed for

returning ex-offenders. Most spouses and siblings reported faith organizations as community resources, but only half of the parents agreed and none of the adult children group. Using a community support group was reported by most spouses, about half of the parents, and only a few of the siblings; none of the adult children reported support groups as a resource. School was reported to be a Community Resource by at least half of the spouses, parents, and siblings, but not by the adult children group. Transition programs designed for the ex-offender were identified by family members as a resource by many spouses, parents, and siblings but only one adult child.

The Government Resources reported by the participants consisted of food stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Most spouses but only a few parents reported food stamps as a Community Resource viable resource while the sibling and adult children groups did not. A few spouses and about half of the parents reported using TANF as a Government Resource but sibling and adult children did not. A description of the social, community and government resources is listed in Table 9.

Table 9

b-Factor: Available Social, Community and Government Resources

Resources	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
Social Resources				
Friends	6	5	5	1
Church members	5	4	5	1
Community Resources				
Faith-based Organization	5	4	5	
Community support groups	4	4	5	
School	4	4	4	
Transition Programs for Ex-offenders	4	4	6	1
Government Resources				
Food tamps	5	3		
TANF	2	3		
No use of government resources			7	7

c- Factor: Perceptions of the event and perceptions of family. The c-factor in this study of the Family Stress Model represents the family member's perceptions of their loved one's return prior to the actual physical return of the

ex-offender. These perceptions fell into three broad categories for all four family member groups: 1) Positive Perception of the Event, 2) Negative Perception of the Event, 3) and Perceptions of the Extended Family. In addition, the principal researcher reports on the similarities and differences of the perceptions according to the family member relationship groups.

Positive perceptions of the event. The results of the qualitative data analysis revealed that five positive common perceptions of the ex-offender's return were held by members of all four family groups: 1) the ex-offender's release was expected to be a joyous occasion; 2) the release of the ex-offender was not expected to alter family roles and routines; 3) the ex-offender would need a lot of time to adjust; 4) the ex-offender would be a changed person upon release from incarceration; and 5) family members felt prepared to receive the ex-offender into their residence after release.

Negative perceptions of the event. The participants in all four family groups reported several negative common perceptions pertaining to the ex-offender's return that emerged from the data analysis. Family members were concerned that the Criminal Justice System had not adequately prepared the ex-offender for returning to the family, and about the social stigma attached to being a felon and a family member of the felon. Family members reported being uncertain about how the ex-offender would adjust to their release from incarceration in the following ways: the offender would return to criminal activity, use of drugs, not find employment, not be employable, renege on their promise to change their maladaptive behavior, and eventually return to prison. Finally, family members had

mixed emotions about the ex-offender rejoining the family because they held the following perceptions: the ex-offender would not be the same person after their incarceration, the ex-offender had unmet needs, the ex-offender was untrustworthy, the family member/ex-offender relationship had been strained prior to incarceration, and providing support for the ex-offender was an involuntary obligation for the family member.

Differences in positive perceptions between family member groups. The researcher examined the differences in the positive perceptions the four family members groups reported concerning the ex-offender's return to the family by family member groups. Nearly all spouses believed that their ex-offender family member would have a successful reentry with guidance and support from the family members while over half of spouses expected that the ex-offender would assist with household and child rearing duties; over half of spouses reported feeling at peace knowing their loved one was returning from incarceration.

Over half the parents reported that their relationship with their adult child (ex-offender) would be improved and that the ex-offender would be ready for a change once he/she was released from incarceration. More parents believed that the ex-offender would appreciate them more after being imprisoned and that extended family members were happy that the ex-offender was reuniting with their children. Siblings shared Positive Perceptions about the ex-offender's return as follows: all siblings were hopeful that the ex-offender would stop drug use and criminal behavior and most reported that the ex-offender possessed favorable, personal characteristics. A little over half of the siblings felt happy

about the ex-offender's return to live with a different family other than in their own residence and were looking forward to assisting the ex-offender until s/he became self-sufficient. In the adult children group, more than half the participants felt hopeful that their ex-offender parent would have a successful transition and perceived their parents as having skills, knowledge and talents to obtain gainful employment legally without returning to a life of crime. The four family groups also held a number of different negative perceptions about the return of the offender from being incarcerated.

Differences in negative perceptions between family member groups. The principal researcher examined the differences in the negative perceptions held by the four family members groups concerning the ex-offender's return to the family by family member groups. All spouses held two Negative Perception: anger toward the ex-offender prior to his/her release and that the notification that the ex-offender would be released then caused thoughts of past unresolved marital issues to resurface. Nearly all spouses reported feeling concerned about the expectations the ex-offender would bring home after release. Over half the spouses reported anticipating marital conflict and stressful interactions once the ex-offender returned.

In the parents' group, about half of the participants maintained a negative perception that family conflicts would increase when the ex-offender rejoined the family. More than half of the parents worried about the implications the incarceration had on their child's well-being and nearly all parents anticipated placing a time restriction on the amount of support offered to the ex-offender. The sibling group reported more negative

perceptions of the ex-offender's return home when compared to the other relationship groups. All of the siblings perceived that the ex-offender would not discontinue drug use and criminal activity. Most of the siblings anticipated that the ex-offender's return would become a burden to the family members providing support. In addition, most siblings reported having mixed emotions about the ex-offender rejoining the family after release. A little more than half of siblings reported feeling anxious and stressed about the ex-offender release date changing several different times. All of the participants in the adult children group perceived their parent as a failure in their role of a parent and also untrustworthy. Many more than half of the adult children resented being responsible for their parent after release. Of the adult children, only a few believed that their parent would never change their behavior in order to reduce the likelihood of returning to prison shortly after release.

Extended Family member perceptions – positive. The principle researcher asked all family members their perceptions of extended family members would perceive the ex-offender's anticipated release from incarceration. Other family members were identified by participants as immediate, extended and fictive kin or any other family members. The family member perceptions are divided into positive and negative perceptions. In all relationship groups all participants reported that their family members were happy about the ex-offender's expected return. This was the only similar, positive perception the four groups held in common.

Several positive perceptions emerged from the data analysis that is specific to each group. In the spouse's group, 66% of the participants reported that family members

perceived that children need both parents in the home in order to promote health child development. Participants (42%) in the parent group reported that their family members perceived the ex-offender's return as way to bring other family members together. In the sibling group, 42% of the participant reported that their family members were excited about assisting the ex-offender with adjusting to being home while 28% conveyed that their family members were willing to provide support to the ex-offender for a specific period of time. Participants in the adult children group did not report any positive perceptions relative to their "other" family members.

Extended family member perceptions – negative. The data analysis revealed that the members of all four family groups shared similar negative perceptions of the ex-offender's release. Family members were concerned that the offender would not change after release and that the return of the ex-offender would alter the family member's lifestyle. Lastly, participants reported that the family members perceived the ex-offender returning with several unmet needs. The results from the data analysis also yielded the finding that the family members of the spouse's group shared common negative perceptions of the ex-offender.

In the spouse's group, most of the family members reported that the family structure would undergo changes that could cause stress once the ex-offender returned home. A few more than half of spouses reported that family members anticipated that the ex-offender would have challenges adjusting to life after release from incarceration. Extended family members were perceived by half of the spouse group as believing that the

ex-offender would be challenged by trying to reestablish their relationship with the children and challenged because the children were angry at the ex-offender.

In the parent group, nearly three-fourths of parents reports that the extended family members perceived that the ex-offender return would lead to increase conflicts in the family. Only a few parents believed that their extended family members perceived that the ex-offender would be unemployable due to felon status. Another few parents said that family members perceived that the ex-offender's children would be confused about which parent to obey and when to accept parental guidance from the ex-offender.

The family members in the sibling group also shared common negative perceptions. Nearly all siblings reported that their extended family members perceived the ex-offender as unwilling to accept responsibility for action leading to the incarceration. The same number of siblings reported that extended family members perceived that the ex-offender would return to the family with several unmet needs. Less than half of the siblings reported that extended family members perceived that they were not capable of financially supporting the ex-offender and reported that family members perceived feeling apprehensive about the ex-offender living up to his/her responsibility of becoming self-sufficient.

All participants in the adult children group reported that extended family members perceived that the ex-offender would be untrustworthy as a parent following their release from incarceration. About two-thirds of the adult children reported that their extended

family members perceived that the adult children should not engage a relationship with the ex-offender after release from incarceration-

x-Factor—The outcome of intervening factors. The x-factor in the family stress model represents the outcome of a, b, and c, factors. If a family member feel that they have the resources to meet the demands of the stressor (b-factor), combined with favorable perceptions of the stressor (c-factor), the experience may not be reviewed as a crisis (x). Consequently, if family members lack the resources, and perceive the event as a negative experience, the outcome may or may not lead a crisis situation (x-factor). The data analysis indicated that the relationship groups generally perceived the ex-offender homecoming as both negative and positive event. Despite these perceptions, the results revealed that participants did not report that the notification of the ex-offender's return induced a crisis situation.

aA-Factor: Personal pileups of demands. The aA-factor of the family stress model represents the pile-up of demands the participants encountered over time as the result of the ex-offender physically rejoining the family. The principal researcher asked the participants to share their experiences with the ex-offender homecoming and discuss the implications of these experiences on their personal functioning. Based upon the findings several common pile-ups of demands emerged relative to each group.

Personal pileups – spouses. In the spouse group, 5 categories of personal pile-up of demands were identified as 1) spouse's emotional reactions to the return of the ex-offender, 2) relationship challenges within the marital relationship, 3) financial hardships on the

family finances, 4) parenting conflicts and 5) ex-offender's inappropriate behaviors and activities.

Under the category of the spouses emotional reactions, all of the spouses anticipated that the ex-offender would return to drug use and criminal behaviors once released from incarceration; the spouses felt ashamed of the ex-offender; spouses felt judged by other family members for supporting the ex-offender; and, spouses found it difficult to help the ex-offender within their family. A majority of the spouses felt unsure of the person who returned home; expressed frustration with the ex-offender's return; felt that they had to make involuntary sacrifices to accommodate the ex-offender's needs; and felt pity and irritation that they had to share decision-making activities with the ex-offender. That same majority of spouses reported that they felt unappreciated by the ex-offender, angry, mixed emotional feelings about the ex-offender return and resented taking care of the ex-offender's needs.

The category of relationship conflicts includes all of the spouses who reported feeling motivated to work on abandonment issues, while more than half of the spouses reported that marital conflicts intensified once the ex-offender returned home. More than half of the spouses reported that their intimate/sexual relations had changed with their spouse, that the ex-offender appeared to be emotionally withdrawn from the participant and that the ex-offender's return home required changes in the individual routines of family members. All spouses reported that they were solely responsible for the household finances and that the ex-offender remained unemployed for period of time after

incarceration as the ex-offender felony status made it difficult for the ex-offender to obtain employment. Nearly all participants reported that supporting the ex-offender after release lead to a financial strain on the family. More than half of the participants reported that the household expenses increased when the ex-offender returned to the family.

Over half of the spouses reported that the children's behavior changed after once the ex-offender returned to the family, that differences in parenting styles between the spouse and ex-offender lead to stress, and that they reported that they was concerned about how the children would respond to the ex-offender. This same group of spouses also reported that the ex-offender seemed to be very unsure of their parenting skills after being incarcerated.

In the final category, all spouses reported that the needs of the ex-offender overshadowed the participant and other family members. Nearly all spouses reported demanding parole requirements, that the ex-offender exhibited aggressive and institutionalized behaviors, and that the ex-offender had returned with ineffective life skills to live self-sufficiently. About two-thirds of the spouses reported that the ex-offender returned to drug use and criminal activity, the ex-offender exhibited mental health issues and a bad attitude toward the family, and finally, the ex-offenders transportation requirements were overwhelming the family.

Personal pileups – parents. The pile-up of demands that emerged from the parents group fell into five categories. The first category is the parent emotional reactions to the return of the offender. More than half of the parents reported that they are ashamed of the

social stigma associated with being a family member of the ex-offender. Slightly more than half of the parents reported that they worried about the ex-offender's episodes of depression, resented parenting an adult and felt emotionally drained and that they felt compelled to supervise the ex-offender activities after release. More than half of the parents reported that having the ex-offender home required adjustments in the family structure and family members' roles. Just over half of the parents reported that additional family members felt unappreciated by the ex-offender and immediate and extended family members criticized the parents for providing support to the ex-offender.

More than half of the parents conveyed that supporting the ex-offender financially lead to financial hardships on the parent and family. Slightly more than half of the parents reported that the ex-offender did not make a financial contribution to the family and that the ex-offender remains unemployable due to their status as a felon. More than half of the parents reported that they felt that they had regressed into previous parenting techniques such that they drew on earlier parenting practices when the ex-offender was a developing adolescent and reported having difficulty balancing the needs of the ex-offender with their own needs as parents.

More than half of parents reported that the ex-offender had to meet demanding parole requirements that had a negative impact on the family such as the parole officer making unannounced visits to the residence and conducting a search of illegal, criminal paraphilia of all the occupants within the home. That same number of parents reported that they had difficulty with adjusting to the ex-offender's institutionalized behaviors. Slightly

more than half of parents reported that the ex-offender did not comply with family boundaries established by the parents.

Personal pileups – siblings. In the siblings groups 5 categories of personal-pileup of demands emerged from the data analysis. The first category involves the siblings' emotional reactions to the ex-offenders return. More than half of siblings reported that they worried about the ex-offender meeting basic needs and providing emotional support was emotionally draining and reported that supporting the ex-offender lead to stress and that providing emotional support became stressful over time.

Nearly all of the siblings reported that they served in the role of a mediator between additional family members and ex-offender top minimize family conflict. Most of the siblings reported that extended family members refused to support the ex-offender and that the participants experienced difficulty with establishing boundaries when effectively engaging the ex-offender.

Nearly all of the siblings reported that it was difficult for the ex-offender to locate employment after release. Most of the siblings reported that the ex-offender was unable to make a financial contribution to the family finances. Over half of the siblings reported that the ex-offender's homecoming led to increased family financial expenses and that the participants reported that they had not received financial assistance from extended family members in support of the ex-offender.

The majority of the siblings reported that the incarceration changes the relationship between the siblings and the ex-offender once released. Most of the siblings reported

unresolved relationship conflicts while over half of the siblings stated that their extended family members reported refusing to engage a relationship with the ex-offender. Nearly all of the siblings reported that the ex-offender returned to inappropriate behaviors after release. Most of the siblings reported that the criminal justice system did not appropriately prepare family members to deal with the return of the ex-offender. Over half of the siblings reported that the parole requirements were demanding, the ex-offender's institutionalized behaviors were unfamiliar to the family members and that the ex-offender required support over a longer periods of time than was expected.

Personal pileups – adult children. In the adult children group, 5 categories of personal pile-ups of demands emerged from the data analysis. The first category of personal pile-up of demands includes the adult children emotional reactions. All of the adult children reported that they worried about the ex-offender returning to criminal behaviors after release. One of the adult children reported that providing the ex-offender with transportation was stressful and other adult children felt compelled to supervise the ex-offender's behaviors after release. One adult child reported that their life-style changed after the ex-offender parent returned and reported that once the ex-offender parent returned to the adult-child residence, the ex-offender took over the adult child's home. All of the adult children reported that other siblings were unwilling to provide financial support to the ex-offender parent.

All three adult children reported that the parent-child relationship had changed for the worse after release from incarceration. One adult child reported that they resented the

ex-offender parent for attempting to parent the adult child. All of the adult children reported that their ex-offender parent was unable to manage their freedom from incarceration after release. One adult child reported that the ex-offender parole requirements were found to be demanding which lead to stressful interactions between the adult-children and the ex-offender parent. A description of the aA-factors—pile-up of demands for the different groups are listed in Table 10.

Table 10

aA-Factor: Pile-up of Demands Categories by Groups

Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult-Children (n=7)
Spouse emotional reactions	Parents emotional reactions	Siblings emotional reactions	Adult children emotional reactions
Relationship conflicts	Family challenges	Family challenges	Family challenges
Financial hardships	Financial hardships	Financial Hardships	Financial hardships
Parenting conflicts	Parenting Conflicts	Relationship adversities	Relationship adversities
Ex-offender behaviors & Activities	Ex-offender behaviors & activities	Ex-offenders behaviors & activities	Ex-offender behaviors & activities

bB Factors: New and adaptive resources. The bB-factors of the model of family stress entails new and adaptive resources participants build upon to assist them with managing stressor brought on by the actual return of the ex-offender to the family. These additional resources are different from the resources the participants used once they were notified the ex-offender would be released from incarceration (see chart 5, 6, 7, & 8 for

pre-existing resources). New and existing resources are categorized according to internal qualities, external resources, maladaptive resources, family resources, and social/community/government resources.

New and adaptive resources – spouses. In the spouses group, the internal qualities that served as resources included two-thirds of the spouses who reported self-reliance as a new and adaptive resource. All of the spouses reported emotional strength and increased willingness to communicate with the ex-offender as a new and adaptive resource. Nearly all of the spouses reported acceptance of the ex-offender and his/her plight and a commitment to working on the marital challenges. More than half of the spouses reported personal reliance as resource as well.

The spouses also reported new and adaptive external resources. Nearly all of the spouses reported that the assistance provided by the ex-offender after release was a new resource, while very few reported no new and adaptive external resources. Over half of the spouses reported that their marriages remained intact after release from incarceration as being a new and adaptive resource.

The spouses also reported family resources as a new adaptive resource. Nearly all of the spouses reported that extended family members financially supported the ex-offender after release. Over half of the spouses reported that the extended family members provided emotional support to the participant as well as the ex-offender. More than half of the spouses reported that additional family members were unable to offer support to both the participant and ex-offender and that they provided support to all family members once the

ex-offender returned from incarceration. Just over half of the spouses reported that immediate and extended family members combined resources to meet the needs of the family.

New and adaptive resources – parents. In the parents' group, none of the participants reported that they had developed new or adaptive internal qualities, external resources or maladaptive resources after the ex-offender returned to the family. Most parents reported legal assistance as a new and adaptive community resource, while over half reported that the Adult Parole department was a government resource. The parents did not report any new and adaptive social resources.

New adaptive resources – siblings. The siblings identified only one modification to their internal qualities. These participants reported that they adapted their prayer activities by increasing the amount of time spent in conducting daily prayers. External resources maladaptive resources, family resources, and social, community and government resources were not reported as new or adaptive resources

New and adaptive resources – adult children. This researcher found that that the adult children did not report having any new adaptive resources to assist them with meeting the demands brought on by the ex-offender's return to the family. A description of the new and adaptive resources categorized as internal qualities and external resources are presented in Table 11. Maladaptive resources and family resources by groups are captured in Table 12. Social, community and government resources are listed in Table 13 respectively.

Table 11

bB-Factor: New and Adaptive Resources by Groups

Resources	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult Children (n=3)
<u>Internal Qualities</u>				
Emotional strength	6			
Increased willingness Communicate	6			
Accepting of the offender	5			
Increased prayer activities			6	
No new internal qualities	2	7	1	3
<u>External resources</u>				
Ex-offender helpful	5			
Marriage remain intact	4			
Pawned household items		4		
No external resources	5	7	7	3

Note: Internal Qualities & External Resources

TABLE 12

bB-Factor: New and Adaptive Resources by Groups (Maladaptive and Family Resources)

Resources	Spouses (n=6)	Parents (n=7)	Siblings (n=7)	Adult children (n=3)
<u>Maladaptive Resources</u>				
No maladaptive resources reported	6	7	7	3
<u>Family Resources</u>				
Extended family members Provided financial support to Participant	5		6	
Extended family members provided emotional support	2			
*Additional family members unable to offer support		5		
Participant supported the entire family		5		
Increased worship activities			5	
Participant spouse supported the ex-offender			5	
Increased family Communications			5	
No family resources	2	2	6	3

*Denotes negative resources as reported by the participants in this study.

Table 13

bB-Factor: New and Adaptive Resources by Groups (Social, Community & Government Resources)

Resources	Spouses (n-6)	Parents (n-7)	Siblings (n-7)	Parents (n-3)
No Community Resources	6	2	7	3
Community Resources				
Legal Assistance		4		
No new community resources	5	2	7	3
Government Resources				
State mandated job search training for the ex- offender	4			
Texas Workforce Commission	4			
Criminal Justice System	6			
Adult Parole Department	4			
No Government Resources		2	7	3

cC-Factor—Coherence. According to McCubbin and Patterson (1983a & 1983b), the cC factor in the Double-ABCX model of family stress represents the participants' overall understanding and acceptance of the stress-evoking event based upon the meaning family members assign to the experience of having a loved one return from incarceration and reenters the family. In this current study, the data for the cC factor is categorized according to positive, negative and ambiguous coherence.

Positive coherence. All of the spouses indicate that they were aware and accepted their new role in the family due to the reorganization of the family structure that took place when the ex-offender returned. This positive understanding of their responsibility towards the ex-offender is termed *positive coherence*. Nearly all of the spouses reported that 1) communication is important in the marriage; 2) recognition that the ex-offender needed support from family members; 3) acknowledging that it is important for the spouse to remain committed to marriage despite marital challenges; and 4) continuing to feel hopeful towards the ex-offender being able to regain their trust. Two-thirds of the spouses recognized that it would take time for the ex-offender to adjust to being home.

The participants in the parents' group reported several positive statements about coherence that was associated with the ex-offender's return. All of the parents indicated that they, as well as other family members, had to be patient with the ex-offender while they adjusted to being home. Well over half of the parents reported that 1) it is important for parents to support the ex-offender; 2) they must uphold the notion that God will protect the ex-offender; and, 3) it is important to communicate with the ex-offender on regular

basis as a measure to remain aware of the ex-offender's activities. Slightly more than half of the parents reported that they were mentally, emotionally, and financially prepared for the ex-offender's return home and they also expressed that they did fulfill their obligation to support the ex-offender.

The participants in the sibling group reported more positive coherence than the other groups. Nearly all of the siblings reported that family support is vital to the ex-offender successful return from incarceration. Most of the siblings reported the following:

1. Empathic towards the ex-offender's plight.
2. Acceptance of their role in supporting the ex-offender.
3. Pleased with the positive efforts the ex-offender exhibited towards locating employment and becoming lawfully abiding citizen.
4. Acknowledgement that rebuilding a relationship with the ex-offender is a process and that it will take time.
5. It is important for family members to seek out community resources to lessen the burden of supporting the ex-offender.
6. It is important that the family members express to the ex-offender love, kindness and patience.

Over half of the siblings also reported that they 1) feel a sense of family wholeness at family gatherings since the ex-offender's release; 2) are happy to assist the ex-offender in adjusting to family life; 3) the ex-offender was eager in assisting with daily family functions; and, 4) it is important to increase involvement with the ex-offender after release.

The adult children reported only one positive coherence when compared to the other group members. Two of the three adult children remained hopeful that the ex-offender parent would eventually change his/her behavior after release.

Negative coherence. Negative Coherence is defined as the negative perceptions of the event. The participants in the spouses group reported a vast range of statements that contained an understanding (coherence) of their experience that was negative. All of the spouses conveyed the following:

1. Supporting the ex-offender became difficult to maintain over time.
2. Limited community resources were available to assist family members when they supported the ex-offender.
3. Resented providing support to the ex-offender over time.
4. The ex-offender returned with several unmet needs.
5. Parole requirements became too demanding.
6. Felt ashamed of having a spouse as an ex-offender.
7. Felt stigmatized by the community members.

Nearly all of the spouses recognized that if the ex-offender continued to use drugs after his/her release from prison that 1) the ex-offender would either end up dead or incarcerated again; 2) decided that they would refuse to assist the ex-offender if the ex-offender re-offends and was sent back to prison; 3) anticipated that the ex-offender would return to criminal activity; and 4) endured challenges with negotiating new parental roles. Two-thirds of the spouses reported that 1) they anticipated that the ex-offender would have a

life-long battle abstaining from drug use, and 2) participants commonly felt disrespected by the ex-offender.

In the parent group, all reported that assisting the ex-offender was stressful and that more community resources were needed to assist both the ex-offender and the family member supporting the ex-offender. More than half of the parents acknowledged that employers were not empathic towards the ex-offender; the ex-offender returned with several unmet needs; and that the parents felt emotionally drained. Half of the parents indicated that they were disappointed with the lack of effort the ex-offender displayed towards becoming self-sufficient and that the parents and their immediate family members resented negative judgments stated by extended family members.

Nearly the entire siblings group reported that the ex-offender felon status negatively contributed to the ex-offender unemployment and the siblings were unhappy with the social stigma surrounding the ex-offender and their family. Most of the siblings reported that 1) they maintained trust/mistrust issues toward the ex-offender; 2) they anticipated the ex-offender would return to incarceration after release within a short period of time; 3) more community resources are needed; and 4) the siblings ashamed of the ex-offender family members. Over half of the siblings were worried about the ex-offender upholding the law after their release.

In the adult children group, all three participants reported that 1) the adult-child relationship was strained; 2) the ex-offender parent did not live up to their roles as a parent and continued conflict between the participants and ex-offender and 3) the adult children

resented the ex-offender parent attempting to re-parent the adult-child after release. Two of the three adult children reported that 1) they felt hopeless when the ex-offender parent would change behavior; 2) more community resources was needed; 3) assisting the ex-offender became difficult to maintain over time; 4) participants felt emotionally drained; and 5) they anticipated the ex-offender parent would eventually go back to prison.

Ambiguous coherence. Ambiguous coherence indicates that the participants felt mixed emotions concerning their awareness and acceptance of the ex-offenders return. All of the spouses reported that they were happy the ex-offender returned home, but found it difficult to have the ex-offender present in the family. All of the spouses also reported that upon the ex-offender's initial return, the couple experienced marital bliss, but after a few weeks of having the ex-offender home the marriage became heavily burdened by marital strife.

In the parents' group, nearly all reported that their child was not the same person who returned to the family as they had been prior to incarceration. Over half of the parents reported that although they were willing to support the ex-offender after release, they also felt compelled to relinquish their responsibility of supporting the ex-offender over some period of time.

In the sibling group, nearly all participants indicated that they were both happy and sad that the ex-offender returned to the family, but felt that showing the ex-offender "tough love" was important and expressed that the ex-offender needed to change social environments in order to have a successful reentry. Most of the siblings reported that

prison life changed the ex-offender in both positive and negative ways and the participants expected a different person to return home and recognize that they cannot change the ex-offender as the ex-offender must be willing to make changes themselves. Over half of the siblings reported feeling joyful about the ex-offender's return, but kept the ex-offender return a private matter between selected members of the family, and siblings acknowledged that they struggled with the delicate balance between supporting the ex-offender and creating a dependency.

In the adult children group, all three participants expressed feeling both happy and sad about the ex-offender's homecoming and that they loved their ex-offender parent, but resented the parent for becoming incarcerated. Of the adult children, two stated that the person who went to prison was not the same person who returned home. These same siblings accepted that the ex-offender had returned home, but found that having the ex-offender living within the same household was difficult.

Quantitative Analysis

In this mixed methods study, the researcher interviewed study participants and then tested two hypotheses to explore how the four relationship groups (n=23) did cope and adapt to the stress of a family member who had been released from prison to the care of these family members. In hypothesis 1, the *Family Crisis Orientation Personal Evaluation Scale* (F-COPES) was used to measure participant coping strategies; participant scores on five subscales were summed into a total score that was used as the dependent variable. In hypothesis 2, the *Family Hardiness Index* (FHI) measures the family's ability to exercise

family hardiness while contending with stress and changes in the family; the total score from the FHI was used as the dependent variable in this analysis.

This researcher had proposed to test for differences using the *t-test* for independent means, but the sample size proved too small for that testing to be meaningful. Instead, linear regression was used to test the six sub-questions produced by the two hypotheses. Two findings proved to have a significant relationship with the family member scores on the *Family Hardiness Index*: the four relationship groups (location of the ex-offender's return) ($p<.019$) and the length of time since the family member's release from prison ($p<.016$). None of the comparisons with the scores on *F-COPES* on Hypothesis 1 were significant; the length of time family member provided support did not have a significant relationship with scores on the FHI on Hypothesis 2. Since number of participants in this study was small ($n=23$), a strong interpretation of these two findings is not sustainable. However, it is notable that there was a significant finding since the qualitative data supports these two statements: family role played an important role in the quality and level of support the ex-offender was given and the length of time the ex-offender needed support impacted the quality and level of support as well.

Summary of the Findings

This study used both qualitative and quantitative data to test the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress with family members who provided the majority of support when their family member who had been incarcerated returned from prison. The data from the qualitative interviews were used to provide a better understanding of how family members

in four relationship groups managed their stress and scarce resources, adapted and created an understanding of the changes within the family system, and coped over time. The quantitative comparison of scores on the *Family Hardiness Index* with three variables was made to provide insight into the bonadaptation or maladaptation of family members as described in the Model. A comparison of three variables, location of the ex-offender after release, the length of time that the family member provided support, and the length of time since the offender was released were entered in a linear regression with scores from the FHI and F-COPES. Only location of the ex-offender after release (relationship groups) and length of time since the offender was released proved to have a significant relationship with the Family Hardiness Index indicating that family relationship and length of time since release had a significant effect on the bonadaptation of the family.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study is both descriptive and exploratory in nature as it tested the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress to determine the model's usefulness in explaining how 23 family members managed the stressors produced by the reentry of their incarcerated family member into the family, recovery of the family following the stress of reentry, and adaptation of the family to the new changes in the family system. The study used a mixed method approach to obtain a qualitatively rich description of the family members' experiences with the returning ex-offenders and to assess the coping and adaption of the family members using two standardized quantitative instruments, F-COPES and the Family Hardiness Index. Additionally, this chapter explores how four family relationship groups, spouses, parents, siblings, and adult children, uniquely managed and coped with the stressors that followed the reentry of their incarcerated family member. The following variables were tested in the quantitative analysis: length of time since the incarcerated offender's release from prison, the length of time the family member had provided support for the incarcerated offender, and the location of the ex-offender following release.

Theoretical Framework

This researcher tested the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress Adjustment and Adaptation (McCubbin, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1986) to explore how stress manifested in

families after the incarcerated offender was discharged from prison and returned to the family home. Rueben Hill (1947) was one of the first pioneers to explore manifestations of stress in the families by examining war-induced separations between active duty service members and their family members. Based upon his work with families under stress, Hill developed the original ABCX model of family stress which denotes a systemic and linear process family members follow when encountering stressful situations. Even though the original model provided a pathway for scientific exploration of family's under stress, the model failed to establish an empirical explanation as to how families recover, cope and adapt to the stressor demanding change in the family system (McCKenry & Price, 2000; Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 2005). This lack of explanatory power led to McCubbin et al. (1982) expanding on Hill's 1947 original model by adding post-crisis factors that conceptualized family stress as an ever-changing process of adjustment over time (McCubbin et al., 1982; McKenry & Price, 2007). Four factors represent the "Double" in the ABCX Model as follows: aA factor indicates pile-up of stressors, bB factor indicates family resources to combat the stressor, cC factor indicates redefining the stress-evoking situation, and the xX factor indicates adaptation over time. Coping is also highlighted in the model that serves a moderator to lessen the impact of the stressor and promote types of adaptation: maladaptation and bonadaptation.

In the double ABCX Model, stress is characterized as an imbalance between the demands of the stressor event to include related hardships and prior strain produced by the stressor and the capabilities to meet those demands (McCubbin, McCubbin & Patterson,

1982; McCubbin et al., 1986; Smith 1984). The family members give meaning to the stressor-evoking event which influences the degree to which the stressor directly impacts the family. For instance, if the family member defines the stressor in a favorable light, the stressor can be potentially viewed as an opportunity for growth or bonadaptation instead of a catastrophic event. Consequently, if the family perceives the stressor as an unpleasant experience, this may lead to a crisis situation or maladaptation (McCubbin et al., 1986). Whether or not a family experiences stress that leads to crisis is highly contingent upon having the resources to meet the stress-evoking event, coupled with the meaning given to the event. The model implies that if the family uses their resources effectively to combat the stress and perceives the stressor as a manageable event, a crisis situation may not occur. However, the opposite holds true for the family that is unable to identify and utilize effective resources and perceives the stressor negatively, as the possibility of the family experiencing crisis is more likely to take place (Burr, 1973; Hill, 1949; McCubbin et al., 1986; McKenry & Price, 2007). Any changes in family structure and family function may produce stress regardless if the stressor is perceived as a positive or negative event (Boss, 2002; McCubbin et al., 1986). Following changes within the family system due to stress, new coping strategies must be executed to enable the family to reorganize and adapt to new family roles, rules, boundaries and patterns of communication (Boss, 1992; Burr, 1973; McCubbin et al., 1986; McHenry, 2007; Smith, 1984). Family efforts to achieve a new balance in the family system vary along a continuum from bonadaptation to maladaptation

depending upon the fit between resources and demands of the stressors existing within the family (McKenry & Price, 2007; Smith 1982).

Reentry of the Ex-offender and the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress

In this study, the application of the Double ABCX model to families of ex-offenders provided this researcher with an opportunity to expand the understanding of family scientists as to how family members experience and process stress brought on by having their incarcerated family member return from prison. Other researchers (Furstenberg, 1995; Hagan & Dover, 1999; Naser & Visser, 2006) point out that many family members of returning ex-offenders are very wary about their family member's return from incarceration and are concerned that significant adjustment in their family life is necessary and unavoidable. Families with the returning ex-offenders have to adjust to having an additional family member present in the family which produces changes in how family members execute and carry out the family roles, maintain family boundaries and cohesion, and utilize family resources to promote family function (Benokraitis, 2011; Hobfoll & Vaux, in press).

Relationships between the family member and ex-offender are often complicated by past experiences and unresolved issues that may have not been addressed while the ex-offender remained incarcerated. The family members in this study reported that they felt compelled to house the ex-offender because he/she had no other place to live. This researcher found that family members were split on whether their support of the ex-offender was voluntary or involuntary as they carried out daily tasks of supporting the ex-

offender. This current study agreed with Shollenberger's finding (2009) that the level of support that was needed to help the ex-offender reenter society had a profound effect on the family member. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this author found that the level of support needed, expected, and delivered by the four relationship groups differed significantly. This present study also found that any change in the family whether the change is viewed as a positive or negative event leads to a temporary state of disorganization (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Shollenberger, 2009). This result indicates that while the family member is in a state of disorganization, he/she begins the process of selecting and implementing strategies designed to minimize the stress experienced in the family system so that the family can return to their previous state of functioning (McKenry & Price, 2007). Next, this researcher will discuss how families of ex-offenders systematically processed through the factors of the Double ABCX Model of family stress.

a-Factor: Notification that the Incarcerated Offender is Being Released

This study investigated the systemic process family members complete during stressful situations as identified by McCubbin et al. (1982) in the Double ABCX Model. For this study, the researcher established the a-factor (the stressor) as the initial notification the families received that the incarcerated offender was going to be released. The notion to establish the a-factor as the initial stressor is due to the finding that more than half of the participants reported that he or she felt anxiety-stricken after the notification. Result from this study showed that for many family members their emotional reactions ranged along the spectrum of feelings of optimism about the overall reentry experience to feeling ambiguous

and negative about their ex-offender rejoining the family. Naser and Visser (2006) noted in the study of 247 family members and their experiences with incarceration and offender ex-reentry, found that even though the family members responded favorably to the ex-offender's return, they also reported feeling uncertainty about the offender's behavior resuming old behavior and stressed by the hardships of supporting the ex-offender.

In this present study, notification of the ex-offender's release triggered numerous emotional responses in the 23 family members who participated in this study which were similar to those listed above: uncertainty, happiness, negativity, and others that will be described later. Notification of the offender's release begins in the criminal justice system and eventually, the family member is contacted. Prior to release and as a condition of parole, the ex-offender is required to provide the criminal justice representatives with a name or program and the location where the ex-offender anticipates living after leaving incarceration (Naser & Visser, 2006; Schollenberg, 2009; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2001; Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 2011). The criminal justice representative contacts the family member by phone or mail, informing them of the anticipated release of the ex-offender and to verify that the family member is in agreement with the ex-offender returning to their home (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 2011). Feelings of increased anxiety were the most common emotional reaction to the notification of the ex-offender return by the study participants. A mother of an ex-offender son stated:

Lord have mercy, when I got the news my son was coming home, I was so happy, then I started thinking about all that is involved with my son coming home and I began to feel stressed, shoot...I had a panic attack because I was happy he was

home but I also knew the other stuff that came along with him being here, it freaked me out.

b-Factor: Existing Resources

According to the Double ABCX model, the stressful event associated with the a-factor prompts an emotional response which is followed by the process of the family examining their existing resources (b-factor) in anticipation of the incarcerated offender's return to the family. According to some researchers, family members appraise their existing resources in response to a stressor and organize these resources into strategies for minimizing the impact of the stressors on family system (McKenry & Price 2007; McCubbin et al., 1983). For family members in this study, their existing resources fell into three broad categories: personal resources, family resources, and community resources. Personal resources were further classified into three subcategories: internal qualities, external resources, and maladaptive behavior patterns.

Personal resources: Internal qualities. Internal qualities were identified as personal traits that the family member possessed such as self-reliance/independence, compassion, forgiveness, altruism, and spirituality. Below is a response illustrating the internal qualities the participant in the spouse's group drew on once they were notified that the incarcerated family member was scheduled for release. One husband in the spouse's group stated:

I was my own resource. I didn't depend on anyone to help me prepare for my wife's return. I have my faith and I'm pretty independent. I have issues with my wife returning, but I have forgiven her for what she has done in the past. I believe God will provide all our needs and some of our wants. Besides, there ain't no resources I could pull from anywhere else to my knowledge.

Personal resources: External resources. Family members reported that they drew upon the following external resources: employment, homeownership, financial stability, and available transportation. One family member from the sibling group shared how he/she used selected external resources in anticipation of the ex-offender returning:

I knew my brother was coming home. Thank God I have a decent job to help him financially. I have two cars, so he can have one of them and he can live with me until he gets on his feet. But I must admit I had no idea of what to expect. So I'm hoping for the best, but I am also expecting the worst.

Personal resources: Maladaptive behavior patterns. The qualitative results also indicated that some participants exhibited maladaptive behavior patterns as the third category of personal resources in response to the notification of the incarcerated offender's return. These behavior patterns included increased food consumption, cigarette smoking, substance use, overspending, isolation/withdrawal and aloofness. An interesting find in this study revealed that all family members increased their food consumption. One wife from the spouse's group stated:

You know, I didn't know what to think when I got the phone call my husband was coming home. I know I immediately felt stress and turned to food like I always do to comfort me when there is something bothering me or stressing me out.

A family member from the parent group added:

I was so happy my son was coming home, but other family members did feel like I did. So I knew it was no way I could turn to them for support prior to my son coming home. So, what I did, I isolated myself from the rest of the family because I didn't want to let their bad attitude towards my son coming home rain on my parade. So as I prepared for his return, I did so by myself and I didn't worry about what the others thought. I kept to myself and that's how I liked it. It helped me so much because I did not have to be concerned with their foolishness.

A spouse of a returning ex-offender husband stated:

I'm no angel and when things hard I get I get tougher. I ate more than usual, increased my smoking from 1 pack a day to 2 packs a day. I even notice I was drinking more along with other things I can't mention.

Family resources. Participants in this study identified family resources as the second broad category of existing resources that were provided by extended family members such as: family communication, family emotional support, family spirituality, family financial support, family collaboration/cohesion and family resourcefulness. For all 23 family members in this study, family emotional support, family spirituality and family financial support were common resources that provided the greatest support. One family member from the adult children group stated:

Everyone knows my father is a bum, but my other family members will run to his rescue when he needs money. I find it so surprising that they do this since they have a bad perception of who he is. When I was helping my father, I could always turn to my grandparents for money. They never fussed or give me a lecture about why I continue to help my father considering he has let me down most of my life.

Social/community/government resources. Social/community/government resources were the smallest group of existing resources reported by the family members who found friends and church members as their most important resource in this category. Most of the family members identified faith organizations, community support groups, and school colleague as useful social or community resources. A minority of the family members added that transitional housing programs designed for ex-offenders were an important resource as well. Approximately half of the family members identified such government resources as food stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

(TANF) as useful as they managed the stress of providing support for their ex-offender family member. Another group of family members reported that they did not have any government resources to draw on.

c-Factor: Perceptions of the Event

According to the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, the c-factor represents the participants' perceptions of the event. The Model stipulates that each participant's perception of their notification of the incarcerated offender's return home influences how the family member internalizes the meaning of the return and what resources were gathered in preparation of the ex-offender rejoining the family. The family members in this study shared their positive, negative, and ambiguous perceptions concerning the return of the ex-offender.

Positive perceptions. In all four relationship groups, family members reported that their extended family members were initially happy about the ex-offender's return. Examples of the positive perceptions held by the family members included the beliefs that the release would be a joyous occasion at least temporarily; would not alter family patterns; that the ex-offender would need a lot of time to adjust; the ex-offender would have made positive changes while incarcerated; and the family member felt prepared to allow the ex-offender to live with the ex-offender after release.

Spouses believed that the ex-offender could have a successful reentry with the proper guidance and support from family members; that the ex-offender would be a helpful addition to the family and share in the childrearing duties; and the spouses reported feeling

peaceful knowing that their spouse was coming home. Parents held the notion that the parent-child relationship would improve after the ex-offender's release because the ex-offender had learned their lesson and would appreciate the parent more. One family member in the parent group stated:

I'm so happy my son was coming home, as well as, the rest of the family member's. We have planned a big party for his friends and other family member's to welcome him home. Me and my daughter have went shopping and had a blast picking out an outfit for him to wear home from prison and a few things he will need until he finds a job. I can't wait until he gets here.

Siblings indicated that they felt hopeful that the ex-offender would no longer use drugs and successfully resist participation in criminal activity. The adult children believed that their ex-offender parent had the skills and knowledge to obtain gainful employment to support him/her after incarceration.

Negative perceptions. Some family members perceived the ex-offender's homecoming from a negative perspective. They reported several negative perceptions such as the criminal justice system did not adequately prepare the ex-offender to live on the outside. Family members felt unsure that the ex-offender would make the adjustment to being home after incarceration and that this lack of adjustment would lead to a return to criminal activity and drug use, continued unemployment, and an eventual return to prison. The family members also reported that their extended family held several negative beliefs about the ex-offender's return such as:

- 1 The ex-offender would be unwilling to change inappropriate behaviors which would result in another initial incarceration.

- 2 Having the ex-offender in the family member's home would alter the lifestyle of his/her family in a negative way.
- 3 The ex-offender would have too many needs for the family member to effectively assist the ex-offender.

The family members in the four groups reported differences in their negative perceptions concerning the ex-offender's return as some spouses felt angry and abandoned and the parents felt the ex-offender's return would lead to conflict with the other parent and other family members. Between all four groups, the siblings seemed to have the most negative perceptions when compared to other group members as that family group appeared to believe that the ex-offender would become a burden to the family members. A sister in the sibling group stated group stated:

I know my brother, he's so used to other people doing things for him, I know I'm going to get sick and tired of taking care of a grown man. Since he has that "X" on his back, I know I'm going to have to support him for a little while.

Ambiguous perceptions. The family members shared that they held ambiguous perceptions that the ex-offender would not be the same person after incarceration, would be untrustworthy, and that the return would strain the family member/ex-offender relationship. Family members were concerned because their support of the ex-offender was often involuntary and placed a burden on their own existing resources. One wife stated:

I'm both happy and worried that my husband is returning home. I missed him dearly and he needs to be with his family, but I know when he gets here things will be good for a while, but the real man will emerged shortly thereafter. He's a good person, but had a serious drug problem. In the past when he wanted to get hi, he would do anything to get drugs even if it meant to break the law. He would do it. I

don't really want him to come here first after he gets out, but I know he has no other place to go or anyone else to help him, so I'm it.

A parent of an ex-offender son further added:

I know my son should be with his family when he comes home, and I believe that. But, when he gets here I know things are going to change like I will have to hide my purse so he won't steal from and be real careful about the things that come out of his mother. I love me son, but I know him well. I want to give him a fair chance, but I just can't help but to think he's coming home and going rack back to that same ole behavior.

A sibling with a ex-offender brother stated:

My brother is both smart and stupid. He's street savvy, but don't have a clue about staying out of trouble. At first, me and wife was so happy he was coming home, but we also know the drama that he would bring with him. I was so unsure at first, but happy too. I just really didn't know what to expect.

x-Factor: The Physical Return of the Ex-offender

In the Double ABCX Model of family stress, the x-factor is presented as the outcome factor produced by the interaction of the stressful event (a-factor), the existing resources (b-factor), with the perception of the event (c-factor). According to McCubbin et al. (1986), available resources and perception about the event determines whether or not a crisis occurs. For the participants in this study, the ex-offender returning home demanded modifications in the participant's daily living patterns, placing the participant and the family in temporary state of disorganization. In order to recover and mitigate the strain and stress associated with the role of supporting the ex-offender after release, family roles, tasks and responsibilities were renegotiated to return the family to state of balance, where the family members felt they had control of the situation despite the hardship they faced. As the family members adjusted to the return of the ex-offender, many of these adjustments

also produced additional strains on the family, which indicates these families contend with the stress of the supporting the ex-offender over a period of time. The additional strains manifest in the family as a pile-up of demands, which are conceptualized as ongoing stressors produced by adjusting to the changes in family life as a result of helping the ex-offender assimilate into the family.

aA-Factor: The Pileup of Demands

The pile-up of demands in the Double ABCX Model of family stress signifies the accumulation of stressors associated with the participant making the adjustment to the ex-offender's return. Researchers have pointed out in similar studies that out that even though the family members may be willing to support the ex-offender their providing support can be difficult and can weigh heavily on the family member over time, despite their best intentions towards the ex-offender (LaVigne, Visser, Castro, 2004; Martinez, 2006; Naser & Visser, 2006; Shollenberger, 2009; Travis, McBride & Solomon; 2005). This researcher found that her study of 23 family members confirms this finding for the entire participant group, but examination of the experiences reported by the four relationship groups yielded unique differences in how members in these four groups managed their stress, as described below.

The spouse group reported that once the ex-offender returned home the family experienced these changes in their stress: an increase in the family member's emotions, increased relationship conflicts, severe financial hardships, more parenting conflicts, and unexpected ex-offender behaviors. One wife from the spouse group stated:

I find myself very angry with my husband. I was his victim of domestic violence that sent him to prison. I thought I had got over the anger I felt towards him, but when he returned he tried to assume his role as the king of the castle, he constant criticized me for everything I didn't do. He didn't even appreciate how much time. I spent running down the highway to see him in prison or the money I put on his books to make sure he had what he needed. He didn't care that I took money for the family table to give to him. He refuses to get a job right away because he felt sorry for himself about being ex-offender and feel no one will hire him. But what does he expect me to do? I have carried this family financially and him to for years. How dare he expect me to continue to take care of him. He's the man, and if he want to be the head this family, then he needs to step up to the plate and act a like a man. I'm so frustrated with him I could just scream I tell you, I could just scream.

The parents also had an emotional reaction to the ex-offender's return home as they reported increased family challenges, financial hardships, parent to adult child conflicts, and ex-offender behaviors as pileup of stressors produced as the family adjusted to the ex-offender returning home. One participant in the parent group indicated that:

I was glad my daughter returned home, but I had I a tough time letting go of my parenting responsibilities to my granddaughters when their mother returned. Boy, I tell you, when my daughter returned home she and I conflicted a lot about how to parent the girls because we had different parenting philosophies. Of course I had the girls the whole time she was locked up and I resented the fact she came home and did away with the structure and rules I established for the girls. I know she's their mother, but she is not necessarily a good parent. So I had to bite my lip a whole lot when I would see the things she was allowing the kids to do.

Siblings reported pile-ups as they experienced an emotional reaction to the return of their ex-offender sibling. A few of the siblings felt happy when the ex-offender returned home, but the happiness was short lived because they reported that the ex-offender lacked initiative and motivation to become self-sufficient. Members of the sibling group had to deal with expectations and perceptions of other siblings and parents who held different opinions about how much support that sibling ought to provide to the ex-offender and even

the length of time that support should be provided. A participant in the sibling group reported that:

My other brothers and sisters just don't understand what my sister has to go through to adjust to being home and the challenges she has to face. They expect me to treat my sister badly since she has a long history of doing the wrong things. They constantly told me that it would be a matter of time before she breaks the law and return back to prison. I always felt I had to defend my sister and myself against the family member's. Since we share difference as to how I should support my sister, I stop talking to them for a while.

The adult children reported a pileup of demands when their ex-offender parent returned to the family that included: emotional reaction about the return, family challenges, financial hardship, relationship adversities, and ex-offender behaviors and activities. An adult daughter stated the following about her ex-offender father:

First of all I love my father, but he can be mean as a snake. He beat my mother for years and didn't care what we thought about that. I tried to have him arrested several time for hitting my mother, but my mother always refused to press charges. When he got locked up, my mother never worked, so they lost their house and now she lives with me and my father does to now that he's released from prison. I hate my father living here with me, because he hasn't changed This abusive behavior towards my mother and I find it very difficult to stay out of their marriage. My father and I have learned to stay away from each other because we don't get along. I will never get along with him as long he feels he can hurt my mother.

The results from this study indicated that the return of the ex-offender produced a disruption in the participant's family to a degree which required ongoing adjustments in the way the family functioned prior to the ex-offender returning home. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that these adjustments required modification in the current resources needed to meet the new demands in the family system as a method to return the family to effective state of functioning (McCubnin, et al., 1983). For the participants in this study, the

appraisal of new and adaptive resources served as an automatic response to the new changes in the family. The resources were perceived as useful in minimizing strains placed on the family due to the ex-offenders return varied by group.

bB-Factor: New and Adaptive Resources

According to the Double ABCX Model of family stress, the authors indicate that as family members adjust to the pile up of demands over time, new and adaptive resources are drawn upon (McCubbin et al. 1986) to stabilize the family system. Shollenberger (2009) & Naser and Visser (2006) found in their study that family members experiencing ex-offender reentry draw on resources such as internal qualities and external resources to reduce the pressures and hardships associated with of the ex-offender returning. Hobfoll & Vaux (in press) further postulated that family members do not simply draw on resources to fit the demands of the stressor, instead family members mold current resources to meet challenging demands. However, this study did not indicate that the resources for which the participants drew on were different or modified from previous resources used to relieve stress in the family once the notification of the ex-offender was given. In this current study, new and adaptive resources were classified into five subgroups: 1) internal qualities, 2) external resources, 3) maladaptive behavior patterns, 4) family resources, and 5) social/community/government resources. Of the four relationship groups, the adult children and siblings did not report any new or adapted internal qualities, external resources, maladaptive behavior patterns, or community and governmental resources. The

participants in the parent group reported no new internal qualities, external resources, or maladaptive behavior patterns that they drew on after the ex-offender's release.

Internal qualities. Only the spouses reported drawing upon new internal qualities when the ex-offender returned home: adjustment, self-reliance, emotional strength, and increase willingness to communication, acceptance of the ex-offender plight, and commitment to working on the marital challenges. A husband of an ex-offender spouse stated the following:

Me and my wife always had a hard time communicating, but since she's been home and off drugs for the time, she seemed willing to communicate more. As a man, I different than most men, because I have no problem with communicating, but my wife use to, but for now, she seems to be more open.

Another spouse stated that due to her grow in personal strength while her husband was away, she could interact in a better way with her husband. She reported:

When he came home and all the needs he had to deal with almost drove me crazy. But through prayer and patience, I developed enough strength to push through the tough times. We are not out of the woods yet, but I can honest say I didn't know if I had it in me until faced with my husband coming home and dealing with his issues. I'm so proud of myself.

Generally, the participants in this study did not report any additional resources added or modified once the ex-offender return to the family.

External resources. The researcher found that most of the participants in this study did not use or reported new resources or adapted current resources to accommodate the return of the ex-offender. Although the majority of the participants did not identify new resources or modifying the current ones, the resources drawn upon when initial

stressor occurred were proven just as effective during the reentry process. Perhaps, another explanation for this finding may suggest that the slightest change in the manner the resources were executed went undetected by the family members.

Maladaptive behavior patterns. The researcher noted that maladaptive behavior patterns were identified by the participants prior to the ex-offenders release. As the ex-offender physically returned to the family, participants in this study did not indicate that they modified or add new maladaptive behavior patterns in lieu of the ex-offender's return. Thus, the researcher concluded that most of the participants perceived their current repertoire of maladaptive behavior patterns as useful during both the notification and in anticipation of the ex-offender's return and the actual physical return of the ex-offender.

Family resources. Spouses, parents and siblings reported that extended family members provided support to both the participant and ex-offender such as financial support, emotional support and increased family faith-based activities. One adult son with a returning ex-offender father reported other family members offered financial support, while the other adult children in this study did not report additional family members offered support to the either participant or ex-offender. A sibling stated the following about family support:

I'm just so grateful to have had my aunts and uncles to help me with my daughter needs. They would come over and get me to church when I was feeling helpless and exhausted with everything I had to do for my daughter. They were a Godsend.

Social/community/government Resources. It is common for the ex-offender to leave incarceration under the supervision of the criminal justice system for a specific

amount. The parents identified only the Adult Parole Department and legal assistance as a new community resource. A mother of a son stated:

I'm glad to have parole officer keep an eye on my son. He seems to be wanting to do the right thing now that he knows he has to answer to parole officer. This is a big help to me because I don't worry as much about him doing the right thing.

One adult child participant reported:

I know my mother is on parole and there are some things she have to do, but I hate the PO coming to the house whenever he get good and ready without any notice... I also hate the fact that my home can become subjected to a search at any time. This makes me feel violated and my privacy taken away.

Even though some of the participants in this study found the Adult Parole Department as useful resources, the majority of spouses, siblings, and adult children found that department intrusive because of their unannounced mandatory wellness checks of the ex-offender interrupted daily routines and violation of personal privacy.

cC—Factor: Coherence

The cC factor in the Double ABCX Model refers to the participant's general orientation to the overall circumstances produced by the ex-offender's return. Anonovsky's & Sourani's research (1988) describes this orientation in this way: the participant feels a sense of confidence that both the internal and external environment is predictable and manageable despite the demands of the stressor event (the return of the offender) that will lead to changes in the family's life. This researcher's work confirms coherence as conceptualized in the Double ABCX Model of family stress and as defined by McCubbin and Patterson (1986). Coherence was found to be highly influenced by the experiences of

the family while under stress, and that the stress shapes the meaning the family gives to the whole crisis situation, including the stressor event, added sources of strain (pile-ups), and the resources family members used to meet the demands of the stressors (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). This sense of coherence is based on the family member's confidence in a predictable and manageable world that shapes and facilitates the family's adaptive power over time (McCubbin & Patterson). In this study, the participants' reports of coherence were organized into three subcategories: positive, negative and ambiguous coherence.

Positive coherence. When the four relationship groups were compared, the spouse group reported that they perceived that their marriage would improve now that the ex-offender had returned. The spouses understood that commitment, trust, and communication were vitally important for marital satisfaction. They recognized that the ex-offender spouse would make changes while adapting to being home and realized that the ex-offender might not be emotionally available to add to the quality of their marriage or even be able to find employment in order to make a financial contribution to the family.

The parent group held a sense of positive coherence that included their in-depth understanding of the ex-offender's needs; this group accepted that they must carry out the responsibilities of assisting their son/daughter during the transition of adapting to being home. The parents accepted that they must show patience and increase communication interactions with the ex-offender as a way to remain abreast of the ex-offender's needs and measure the ex-offender's progress with adapting to being in the family. The parents also demonstrated their positive coherence through their spiritual belief and faith that God

would provide and protect the ex-offender during periods when the parents felt that the ex-offender needs exceeds the parent's ability to support. One parent indicated:

I know my son have a lot stuff to deal with. As his parent it is my responsibilities to help him where I can. And when it all becomes too much, I know God will step and pick up where I left off.

The siblings expressed more positive coherence when compared to the other relationship groups. These participants expressed empathy, love, kindness, and patience towards the ex-offender and his/ her plight; they accepted their role as one of providing support and acknowledged that rebuilding their relationship with the ex-offender would take time. The siblings also reported that the ex-offender returned with many unmet needs and that it was important to seek community resources to lessen the burden on them of providing for the ex-offender. Siblings stated that they felt a sense of family wholeness since the ex-offender returned and were happy to offer support and felt willing to increase involvement with the ex-offender's daily activities. The adult children were the group who were the least likely to express positive coherence about the return of the ex-offender; still, they remained hopeful that the ex-offender would change any negative behaviors.

Negative coherence. The participants in the four relationship groups also expressed negative coherence towards the ex-offender return. The spouses were wary about the ex-offender's continued drug use and realized that their ex-offender spouses' drug addiction was beyond their capabilities to support. Several spouses accepted the fact that the ex-offender would have a life-long battle with drug addiction and the ex-offender would be constantly tempted to return to criminal activity to support their drug addiction; they

understood that this would lead ultimately to incarceration again. Although the spouses perceived the ex-offender as supporting them with their parental responsibilities, the spouse understood that the ex-offender lacked respect from their children; often, the spouse and ex-offender would have conflict over their different parenting practices would lead to their renegotiating parental roles.

The parent group acknowledged that despite taking on the responsibility to support the ex-offender, they perceived their experience of supporting the ex-offender as stressful on the three levels: emotional, physical, and psychological levels. The parents expressed their need for more available community resources and were frustrated that employers were unwilling to hire felons. The parents indicated that there was a delicate balance between offering support to the ex-offender and creating a dependency. Some of the parents felt that in spite of their effort to help the ex-offender, the ex-offender showed limited initiative toward becoming self-sufficient. One parent stated:

I get so mad with my son. I have given him everything he needs to get started with living and he sits on his butt unwilling to do anything. I feel like I'm working hard than my son for my son's his life than he is.

The sibling group appeared to understand the difficulty the ex-offender would encounter seeking employment; this difficulty led the ex-offender to depend on their siblings for additional financial support. The siblings became increasingly aware of the stigma associated with family members of the ex-offender and found these stereotypical

judgments personally hurtful. Several of the participants reported feeling of shame towards the ex-offender in their family. One sibling stated:

People assume that when you have a family member to go to jail, means that they come from a bad family. My family members are good, law-abiding people with strong spiritual ties to God. For people to make these assumptions about me simply because my brother went to prison is ridiculous. I have to admit sometime I feel ashamed to tell anybody I had a relative to go to prison.

The siblings who had an ex-offender family member with addiction problems were more likely to mistrust the ex-offender or believe that the ex-offender would continue to abstain from drug use after the honeymoon period wore off. This group appeared to be quite realistic about the difficulties associated with the ex-offender becoming self-sufficient over time. Like the parents, the siblings also reported that they found limited community resources to assist the ex-offenders; both groups stated that they believed that the addictive behavior of the ex-offender would lead the ex-offender to criminal behavior.

The adult children expressed negative coherence due to their previously strained parent-child relationship and negative views of the ex-offender parent even trying to carry out their role as a parent. For some of the adult children participants, the ex-offender parent was not present in the adult child's life prior to incapacitation. Upon release, the adult children resented the ex-offender parent attempting to re-parent the adult child and expressed a sense of hopelessness that the ex-offender would change behavior in the immediate future. Adult children also reported as resenting the ex-offender over time because of the emotional and financially drain.

Ambiguous coherence. According to this researcher, ambiguous coherence indicates the mixed beliefs some participants held about having the ex-offender return to the family. Some members from the spouse group expressed both feeling happiness about the ex-offender's release and also feeling the pressures associated with supporting the ex-offender. The spouses also reported that at least initially, when the ex-offender returned home, they felt a heightened sense of marital bliss, which faded quickly due to increased conflicts, unrealistic expectations, unfulfilled promises, financial deprivation and criminality. One reported:

It was all good when my wife first returned, but she got back with those no good friends and started using again. She acted she loved the drugs more than she cared for the me or other family members.

For some members of the parent group, ambiguous coherence involved perceptions that their son/daughter who came home was not the same person who went into prison.

One parent stated:

He looks and sounds the old person but his behavior is different and I feel an emotion disconnect from my child. I'm trying to see this new person based on who I thought he was before he went in, but I'm seeing some different, so I recognize that I have to get to know my child all over again.

Participants in the parent group also expressed their deep commitment, within their capabilities, to assist the ex-offender, but also felt compelled to relinquish their parental obligation toward the ex-offender if the ex-offender failed to comply with household standards and rules and lacked initiative towards becoming self-sufficient over time.

Some participants in the sibling group expressed ambiguous coherence towards the ex-offender's return. Several siblings reported feeling happy, but just as sad about the ex-

offender returning home. On one hand, the siblings understood the importance of assisting the ex-offender, but, on the other hand, the sibling also knew that showing “tough love” to the ex-offender was necessary, even if it meant withdrawing support from the ex-offender. Similar to the parent group, the siblings also expressed that their perception of “who” the ex-offender was prior to entering the criminal justice system had changed both for the positive and negative when the ex-offender returned home. Siblings acknowledged that the changes made by the ex-offender was determined by his or her willingness to live a better life, thus absolving the sibling from personal responsibilities of ensuring the ex-offender make a successful transition back to the family. Siblings were also aware of the fine line between helping the ex-offender and enabling a dependency. One brother of an ex-offender stated:

I don't mind helping my brother, but the moment I feel he is taking advantage of my kindness, I'm cutting him off immediately. He's a grown man, and I refuse to take care of a grown man not willing to help himself.

Some of the adult children also expressed ambiguous coherence as they reported feeling both happy and sad about the ex-offender's return. The adult children indicated that they loved their parent, but resented their incarceration. Although several of the participants reported feeling happy about the ex-offender's homecoming, the participants also reported difficulties associated with sharing a home with their ex-offender parent. An adult child adds:

I'm both sad and happy my father is home, but it is difficult with living with him because we have never really gotten along and I refuse to allow him to tell me what to do in my own house.

Levels of Coping: F-COPES

This researcher used the F-COPES instrument to ascertain the level of coping that participants reported following their adjustment and adaptation to the return of the ex-offender to the family as outlined in the Double ABCX model. McCubbin et al. (1986) stipulated that coping is an intervening factor promoting family adaptation to the new changes in the family. Coping, then, is a multidimensional concept that includes cognitive, behavioral and social activities that individuals and families engage in as an attempt to lessen the impact of the stressor (Hobfoll & Spielberger, 1992). As a process, coping behavior in families may be modified over time such that coping behaviors facilitate family organization and unity and promote growth (Hobfoll & Spielberger 1992; Lazarus & Folkman 1984; McCubbin & Patterson, 1987). This researcher hypothesized but did not find that scores on the F-COPES were related to time since release, length of time family members provided support, and the location of the ex-offender's return after incarceration.

xx –Factor: Adaption—FHI

As the final step in the Double ABCX Model, this researcher used the Family Hardiness Index to explore how families recover and adapt to their new family organizational structure. Adaption is different from adjustment because the adjustment implies a temporary change in the system, while adaptation entails a permanent change in the system with modified roles, responsibilities and task (McKenry & Price, 2002; Antonovsky & Sourani 1988). Family adaptation is defined as the degree to which the family system alters its internal functions to achieve homeostasis (McKenry & Price). For

this study, the researcher hypothesized and found that there was a statistically significant relationship between the group family hardiness scores and two variables: time since release and location of where the ex-offender lived after release. There was no relationship between the FHI and the length of time the family member provided support.

Strengths of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress

To date, the criminal justice and family science scholarship have not tested or applied the Double ABCX Model to families of returning ex-offenders. Other researchers have found that individual families do experience stressful circumstances, crisis and subsequent adaptation as an ongoing and dynamic process that either promotes growth or immobilize family function (Boss, 2003; Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985). Previous researchers have found that the process of adaptation is affected by the family's responses to a stressful event as in the case of ex-offender reentry, their available resources, perceptions of the event and presence or absence of effective coping strategies determine whether or not a family can overcome stressful situations (McKenry & Price, 2002).

Applying the Double ABCX to families of returning ex-offenders provided the researcher with a systemic and linear process to explore stress in the family over several variables such as length of time since return and length of time the family provided support from a theoretical perspective instead of simply describing the stress event without. By using this theoretical model, this researcher could systemically examine how stress was experienced in the families of returned ex-offender; provide an understanding of coping mechanisms families' rely on to promote adaptation over time. Furthermore, model

provides insight as to how and why some families are either successful or unsuccessful with managing stress manifested in the system. The Double ABCX model is parsimonious and practical in that it provides a pragmatic view of how families respond to, interact with, and overcome or succumb to stressful situations.

Limitations of the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress

From the in-depth data gathered by this researcher, three limitations were identified when the Model was applied to families of returning ex-offenders. First, as described by McCubbin et al. (1983), the model is static and inflexible in asserting that when a family experiences crisis, they do so in a systemic, linear progressive fashion until adaptation occurs. Like McCubbin et al. (1983a) this researcher found that the participants in this study reported their experiences of stress in a circular fashion such that family members were unable to distinguish the stressor event from their reaction to the stressor. The source of stress is not inherent in the stressor by itself, but rather, is part of the larger family response to the stressor event (Smith, 1984). Family stress as experienced by the families in this study is a dynamic, ongoing process where the family member contends with a number of life hardship and strains at one time that require an evaluations resources for multiple stressors, while subjectively constructing meaning for each event. A spouse stated:

It has been so hard having my husband home because he acts like one of the children and have so many needs that I have to worry about. It is hard enough taking care of the home, working, taking care of the children and making sure he has everything he needs is wearing me out.

An adult child also added:

I'm so frustrated with taking care of my mother now that she's out of prison. She needs this and that, and expect me to do everything for her. I have my own family to think about. I can't be everything to everybody.

Secondly, the pre-crisis stage of the model does not adequately describe the capability of the family member in coping with his/her family events prior to the ex-offender's return. The level and quality of the family member's pre-crisis coping ability would very likely influence whether or not the event becomes a crisis. Some participants in this study had family members who were imprisoned on more than one occasion and eventually returned to the family. Through these recurring incarceration and reentry experiences, the participants had the opportunity to learn from previously ineffective coping strategies and turn them into effective coping strategies which had the advantage of decreasing the family member's perception that the ex-offender's most recent return was as major a stressor event as other families regardless of the changes the family member experienced. One family member stated:

It's been hard having my daughter home, but not to the point that feel her being here makes me feel like everything has changed. Some things changes, but we still function like we always do.

Finally, the Model defines a crisis as the family's inability to prevent change thus producing a crisis (Smith, 1984). Based upon the findings of this study, participants unable to change or adjust and adapt to the return of the ex-offender were more likely to experience a crisis due to the rigidity in family boundaries, family roles, patterns, tasks and responsibilities that did not accommodate the changes demands by having an ex-offender

return. Thus, their inability to change as needed is more likely to lead to a crisis (Smith, 1984), then to prevent a crisis from occurring.

Finally, the Model does not take into consideration the rich influence of cultural factors or gender in families experiencing reentry of an ex-offender. For instance, the research literature commonly indicates that African American families consistently have been found to rely on extended family members for support in various areas of family life (Benokratis, 2011); the qualitative data in this study supported this finding with the African Americans in this sample. Conversely, the Caucasian- American participants in this study were more likely to experience isolation when their family member, the ex-offender, returned to the immediate family; this experience caused further strain on this family type and limited their ability to draw on additional family members for resources. As McCubbin et al. (1983) points out, families often experience a crisis because of the lack of effective resources to combat the stressor, but the lack of focus on culture in the Model limits information that is useful. Taking culture into consideration when examining families under stress helps this researcher gain a better insight as to how cultural factors influence and shape family meanings, draws on resources and adapt and potentially provide a better understanding as to “how” and “why” some families recover from stressors while others do not.

Conclusions

In this study, the researcher learned that when the ex-offender returns to the family after release from incarceration the family experiences this as a stressful event that impacts their family on social, emotional, physical and financial levels. The ex-offender's initial homecoming was commonly perceived as ambiguous for most participants who moved from feeling positive at the reunion to feeling more negative over time. Their first reports of happiness evolved into a feeling of uncertainty as ex-offenders rarely made the necessary positive behavioral changes to would help prevent them from re-offending. The act of supporting the ex-offender after release acts as primary source of strain and stress for the family members during the reentry process. Challenges imposed upon the family members as the ex-offender returns did not deter family members from expressing a sense of willingness, commitment and obligation towards helping the ex-offender despite relationship types. Spouses and parents were more likely to demonstrate these qualities over longer periods of time when compared to the siblings and adult children.

The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress remains useful as a theoretical model and research tool because 1) despite the limitation of the Model, the researcher learned that the family members under stress participate in a complex process of matching resources to stressful events that is moderated by the family members perceptions; 2) adjustment and adaptation to new family structure and function takes place over time; and, 3) the model provided the researcher a theoretical lens to explore the experiences of four family groups and yield information very useful to the field of family sciences, plus the professionals

working the field of correction. Using a mixed methods approach added depth and breadth in the exploration process; in the opinion of this researcher using either qualitative or quantitative methods by themselves would have not provided the rich quantity of data that has been gathered.

The researcher also learned that the relationship that the ex-offender had with the family member who provided the majority of their support impacted the type of support as well as the depth and length of time the support was provided. For instance, the result in this study shows that adult children with strained parent-child relationships prior to and during incarceration, were more likely to offer specific, time-limited support to their ex-offender parent. Consequently the spouses and parents felt obligated to offer support for an undetermined amount of time based upon their role as spouse or a parent. Siblings were as willing as the spouses and parents to offer the ex-offender support but like, the adult children participants, the amount and length of support offered was conditional and time-specific. For most of the study participants, although committed to rebuilding the relationship with the ex-offender after release, the process of providing support took a toll on their personal well-being because the type of support and the length of time the support was need to assist the ex-offender with transitioning into the family was draining on their personal resources which caused stress.

Limitations of the Study

1. The small sample size made the generalizability of the quantitative findings more difficult and the findings less powerful.

2. Retrospective data can be less accurate than data gathered over time.
3. Interviewing only one family member may have affected the perspective of how the ex-offender impacted the family.
4. The racial mix of the sample was limited to African American, Caucasian American and Hispanic-American families.

Implications

Community and Government Resources:

1. This study underscores the need for changes in how the criminal justice system prepares both the ex-offender and the family for release. Currently, the offender goes through a pre-release program but not the family. The qualitative interviews in this study show clearly the need for a pre-release program about 90 days BEFORE the ex-offender is released that served BOTH the offender and the family that focuses on such issues as finding a job, setting realistic goals for reintegration and outreach services, and training family members about those behaviors that may surface after the ex-offender leaves incarceration.
2. The qualitative data from this study supported the services that many social services providers in the community provide to the ex-offender but not, according to this sample, to the family members of ex-offenders. The families in this study demonstrated their commitment to the ex-offender despite the enormous financial and emotional costs; it would be very useful if social services agencies expanded their services to include family members well before the release of the offender.

3. Family members reported their lack of contact with any elected officials or policy makers but their experience could add important information to how ex-offenders experience re-entry. It is important for policy makers who govern this population to align their services to reflect the distinctive demands of the reentry process on the ex-offender and the family.
4. Family scholarship and the criminal justice field should enter into a both research and service collaboration for the purpose of developing policy, design programs and offering services that addresses the needs of the ex-offender and the needs of the family members using a comprehensive approach to address various needs.

Professionals Providing Services:

1. Practitioners serving families impacted by the reentry of an ex-offender should develop an in-depth understanding of the dynamics associated with family member's experiences with having an ex-offender after release from incarceration from a systemic perspective. It is more advantages to evaluate the implication of reentry on all family members instead of highlighting the plight of the ex-offender and the challenges faced after incarceration.
2. Community-based practitioners should take an active stance in strengthening family upon the ex-offender return by offering an array of assistance and service uniquely designed for the family of ex-offenders and the ex-offender. Community-based organizations should provide ex-offender family members with resources to assist

with housing, substance treatment, health care, employment child care and vocational training.

3. Counseling services should be offered from an eclectic approach, where various counseling methods can address a multitude of needs within the family and the ex-offender.
4. Community services develop stronger collaborations with faith-based organizations since the faith-based organization commonly have access and offer services to families of the incarcerated and ex-offenders.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research studies exploring families of returning ex-offenders have been virtually non-existent in the family sciences literature. More research is need in this area that focuses on the complicated social process underlying the relationship between the family and the ex-offender using a family theory methodology that highlights the essences of family life and the interactions, when families encounter stressful situations brought on by changes in the family system. The results of this research suggest a number of areas for future research. This small-scale mix-method inquiry into the specific manner stress is manifested in families of returning ex-offenders using a family stress perspective, is the first step toward increased understanding of the complexities involved with family members and ex-offenders. In this section, I will discuss some possible areas for future research.

1. The Family Adjustment and Adaptation and Resiliency model may be better suited to capture the how families face, cope and adapt to stressors based upon a the family typographical make-up.
2. According to research studies examining incarcerated and ex-offenders, more than 75 percent of offenders are parents that will eventually be released from incarceration and return to their families and children (Travis, McBride, & Solomon, 2005). Based upon this notion, more family-based research studies are needed that explores the manner stress is manifested in children and minors with a returning ex-offender parent and the implications on the future of that parent-child relationship.
3. Existing research indicates that family ties of ex-offenders has a significant impact on the ex-offender post release successes or failures (Visher & Travis, 2003), but limited research explores the manner reentry impact family processes over periods of time. This study captured the family member's experiences with an ex-offender for up to two years after release but a longer length of time would provide useful information. Other aspects of change within the family could also be explored such rules, roles, and other structural questions including more gender-related issues.

Summary

By using the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress to study incarcerated families, this researcher discovered that family members make a deep commitment to the ex-offenders as they provide a high level of family involvement with the reentry process despite low support from the community and government. The four family groups in this study reported an exceptional level of stress that results from both the ex-offender and the family being unprepared for the needs and demands of the ex-offender and the changes experienced within the family as family members attempted to adapt to the ex-offender's return. When the responses of the four groups were compared, it was clear that spouses and parents provided more support and experience more stress than the siblings and adult children groups. Support from extended family members, the community, and government agencies are essential to the successful reintegration of the ex-offender, yet most families reported sparse support from these groups.

In this study, the Double ABCX Model of Family Stress was tested on a new group – the ex-offender and his/her family. While the ABCX Model did provide a deeper understanding of how family members process the reentry of the ex-offender, this researcher learned that their experience was more circular than linear, as the Model suggests. More research with a larger sample is needed before the Model can be enlarged to include the notion that managing stress is circular rather than linear. Using a mixed research method allowed this researcher to expand the quantitative data and to explore the experiences of the family members. By using the F-COPES and FHI, this researcher

identified how the process of dealing with stress is impacted by family relationship and length of time the offender has been released. Multiple implications were generated by this study with special emphasis on the need for change at the community and government level including policy changes. Future researchers are encouraged to expand the size of the sample in order to generate strong findings.

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APPENDIX A

Participation Contact Form

Participation Contact Form

Name _____

Phone Number where a message may be left _____

Alternate Phone Number _____ E-mail _____

Circle the best time to call to set up an appointment:

1=Morning 2=Afternoon 3=Evening 4=Anytime

Relationship to the Ex-offender: _____

Are you currently assisting the ex-offender family member? (Circle one answer)

Yes=1 No=2

How long has your family member been released from incarceration
(circle one answer):

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. 91-120 days (3-4 months) | 4. 6 months- 1year |
| 2. 121-150 days (4-5 months) | 5. 1-2years |
| 3. 151-180 days (5-6 months) | 6. 2+years |

Was your ex-offender family member released from (circle one answer):

1=State jail 2=State prison 3=Federal prison

What was the length time your ex-offender family member spent in incarceration?
(Circle one answer).

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0—6 months | 6—9 months | 9—12 months |
| 12—16 months | 16—20 months | 20—24 months |
| 24+--months | | |

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. AFM Code Number: _____
2. City of residence: _____
3. How old are you _____
4. Race (circle one): 1=Caucasian 2=Black 3=Hispanic
 4=American Indian 5=Asian American
 6=Other _____
5. Relationship to the ex-offender _____
6. How long has your ex-offender family member been released from incarceration (circle one).

 0—5 months 6—11 months 12—17 months 18—23 months
7. What was the length time your ex-offender family member spent in incarceration? (circle one)

 0—5months 6-11 months 12—17 months 18—23 months

 24 months +
8. Are you directly providing support for an ex-offender family member?

 1=yes 2=no
9. What type of support do you currently provide to your ex-offender family member? (circle all that apply)

 1=financial support 2=housing support 3=educational support
 4=employment support 5=medical support 6=emotional support
 7=spiritual/religious support 8=parenting support 9=mental health support
 10=Transportation

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Flyer



Exploring the Implications of Ex-offender Reentry on Families

YOU ARE INVITED TO BE A PART OF A STUDY OF ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS OF EX-OFFENDERS!!!

In order to participate you must...

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Have an a loved one released from incarceration
- Currently provide your ex-offender family member with assistance with housing, employment, education, parenting, education and medical and/or mental health support.

Participation Includes:

- Face-to-face two-hour interviews
- Completing questionnaires and surveys
- Participants receive \$20.00 gift his/her time
- Participation is completely voluntary and confidential

Contact information:

Shelia Lumar, MS. LPC-Intern, LCDC-I, CFLE (972)-369-6959 Principal Investigator

Linda Ladd, Ph.D, Psy.D., CFLE (940)-898-2694 Advisor

There is a potential risk of loss of confidential in all e-mail, downloading, and internet transactions. Identifying information will be kept separated from questionnaires and surveys and discussion materials. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (940)898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu .

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Letter

Recruitment Letter

June 1, 2010

Dear Potential Participant,

My name is Shelia Lumar and I am a doctoral student at Texas Woman's University in Denton. I will be conducting a research project where I will be asking your experiences with ex-offender reentry. If you are currently assisting an ex-offender with integrating into the family community after being released six-months or more are at least 21 years old, then you are invited to participate in this study. Your participation will help to better understand how adult ex-offender reentry impact adult family members.

This research project will consist of one face-to-face interview with me which will last approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. The interview will also be audio taped, although no name will be used on the tape. All the information shared in the interview will be confidential and all data will remain anonymous. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please contact me at 972-369-6959 to set up an interview at your convenience and answer any questions you may have. The location of the interview will take place at either a college campus, local library, recreation center, or any optional location you feel comfortable. As an incentive to participate and an appreciation for your time, you will receive a \$25.00 gift completion after your interview. Thank you in advance for your time and willingness to participate in this research project.

Sincerely,

Shelia Lumar

APPENDIX E

Consent Form

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title: The Exploring the Implications of Ex-offender Reentry on Families Functioning Utilizing The Double- ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adjustment & Adaptation in a Mixed-Methods Approach

Investigator: Shelia Lumar, ABD.....972-369-6959
Advisor: Linda Ladd, Ph.D, Psy.D.....940-898-2694

Explanation and Purpose of the Research

You are being asked to participate in a research study for Ms. Lumar's dissertation at Texas Woman's University (TWU). The purpose of this study is to learn of the adult family experiences with ex-offender reentry. In particular, this study will explore adult family member's perspectives on ex-offender reentry and factors that lead to stress.

Your participation will involve a face-to-face interview that will last approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. This interview will take place at a local college campus, community library, recreation center or any optional location you feel comfortable. With your permission, the interview will consist of two parts; verbal discussions and completing written responses to questions on standardized instruments.

Potential Risks

Potential risks related to your participation in this study include loss of confidentiality, coercion, fatigue and emotional discomfort. The following measures will be taken to reduce these risks.

Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law. To assure confidentiality, the investigator will assign an identification code to your data, therefore, your real name will not be used on the audiotape and transcription. Only the investigator, her advisor, and the transcriber will have access to the tapes. Paper documents and audio tapes will be stored in a locked file cabinet, and computer files will be stored on computer disks and stored in a locked file cabinet as well. Following the completion of the study, audio tapes and computer disks will be erased. Paper documents will be shredded within 7 years of collecting the data. The results of this study will be published in the investigator's dissertation and may be published in other research publications as well. However, no names or other identifying information will be used in any publication.

Other potential risks related to your participation in this study include emotional and personal discomfort, fatigue, loss of anonymity and loss of time. Recalling personal and family information may cause some personal discomfort during the interview. If you feel any emotional or personal discomfort and wish to discontinue the study, you may stop at

any time. To avoid fatigue, you may take a (break or breaks) during the interview as needed. You may stop answering any of the questions at any time.

The investigator will provide you with a referral list of community organization and phone numbers that you may use if you feel as though you need to discuss your emotional discomfort with a professional. To reduce loss of anonymity, principal investigator will assign numeric codes to each participant. To reduce loss of time, principal investigator will start and end the interview session on time. Another potential risk is coercion. All potential participants may choose not to participate in the study. Participants may stop at any time during the study without penalty.

The investigator will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the investigator know at once if there is a problem and she will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research.

Participation and Benefits

Your involvement in this research study is completely voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation in the study at any time without penalty. Two direct benefits of this study to you are: (1) at the conclusion of today's interview you will receive a \$20.00 discount store shopping card as appreciation for your participation, time and information, and (2) upon completion of the study a summary of the results will be mailed to you upon request.*

Questions Regarding the Study

If you have any questions about the research study you may ask the investigator; the phone number is at the top of this form. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research or the way this study has been conducted, you may contact the Texas Woman's University Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 940-898-3378 or via e-mail at IRB@twu.edu. You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.

I have read the above consent form and consent to participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

*If you would like to receive a summary of the results of this study, please provide an address to which this summary should be sent:

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APPENDIX F

Interview Questions

Interview Questions

A—Factor (Stressors)

- 1) How did the notification of your loved one's release from incarceration /prison impact you personally

B—Factor (Existing Resources)

- 2) What types of resources did you draw on in anticipation of your loved one return from incarceration?

C—Factor (Perceptions) & X—Factor (Crisis)

- 3) What did you think and feel once your loved one actually returned?.

Aa—Factor (Pile-up of Stressors)

- 4) In your family, how did the experience of having a family member reenter the family cause stress and did you cope with the reentry

Bb—Factor (Adaptive Resources)

- 5) What types of resources did you find useful in helping you cope with your loved one's return.

Cc—Factor (Perceptions Coherence)

- 6) What were your overall thoughts and feelings about your loved returning to your home?
- 7) What would you share with another family member anticipating the release of their love one's return home from incarceration?

APPENDIX G

Prompts for Interview Questions

Prompts

The following prompts will be used to elicit a deeper and broader response from participants during interviews.

1. Can you tell more about that....
2. Can you elaborate on that topic...
3. Is there anything else you would like for me to know...
4. Forgive me, but I don't understand what you mean, please clarify...
5. Can you tell me more about how this experience has impacted your life...
6. Can you please explain what you mean in detail when you say...

APPENDIX H

Participant Responses to Interview Questions

Participants Responses to Interview Questions

The following are excerpts of the participant transcribed interviews in response to questions asked by the researcher.

How did the notification of our loved one's upcoming release from prison impact you personally?

A Spouse of an ex-offender husband stated:

“Well first I was kind of happy, but then I turned real sad real quickly after the phone call. I wanted my husband home, but I knew he would go right back to those drugs and then I knew it would hell with him being home from that point on.”

A Parent with an ex-offender response to the above question:

“I’m happy when I was told my daughter was coming home. She needs to reunite with her baby and her baby needed to know her again. I just hope she makes it. But I’m happy. I have been there for her all along.

A Sibling with an ex-offender sister stated:

“When I got the call me sister was coming, that was the best day. I’ve been taking care her three kids and I tell you, I’m more than ready for her to come get her kids.”

An Adult Daughter with an ex-offender mother:

I was happy when I got the call, but then I thought, dang, my life is about to change now. My mother had nowhere to go, She burned her bridges with our other family members and her friends because she wouldn’t stop getting hi. I’m sure she will try to do the same thing when she returns, but I’m not having that go on in my house, so I expect we will have many conflicts about that”

What types of resources did you draw on in anticipation of your loved one return after release from incarceration?

A Spouse stated of an ex-offender husband stated:

I used the resources such as my church family and other women going through the same ordeal as much now as I did when he was incarcerated. The church has helped me a couple of times financially. His mother is also provided emotional support to stop me from freaking out my husband returning home.

A Parent stated of an ex-offender son stated:

I talked to my friends about it but I was happy he's was coming home, but I knew he will have a hard time staying out of trouble. So that worried me some.

A Sibling with an ex-offender sister:

I remember thinking that I was glad my sister was coming home, because I'm ready for her to come home. There were no resources or to my knowledge there were no resources. I just relied on faith and hoped everything worked out when she got here.

An Adult with an ex-offender mother stated:

I was glad when I first heard she was coming home, but then I started to worry about her stealing and hoped she would not do that when she came home. I talked to my spouse a lot and to my friends to help me deal with that fact my mother was coming home.

What did you think and feel once your family member actually returned?

A Spouse of an ex-offender wife stated:

With my wife coming home means there's another mouth to feed. Me and the girls where barely getting by on what I made and to add another person to the fold means there was an increase in the food budget, household utilities, and personal hygiene stuff.

A Parent of an ex-offender daughter stated:

Well, my son doesn't like my boyfriend at all and when he came home the first thing he wanted me to do is kick my boyfriend out. I didn't though and I had to tell me son to stop interfering with my life. He needed to worry about getting on his feel instead of worrying about what I was doing.

A Sibling with an ex-offender brother stated:

I knew my brother is street smart and it was just a matter of time before he went back to the hood and get into the very things that sent him to prison. I was happy to have him here, but very worried at the same time.

An Adult Daughter with an ex-offender father stated:

I think everybody was happy my father returned home except for me. My father and I have never got along because he treated my mother so badly. Now that here's here I don't have to put up with his crap because he's now under my roof. Things are okay. But I'm glad my mother is at least happy to have him here.

In your family, how did the experience of having a family member reenter the family cause stress and did you cope with the reentry

A Spouse of an ex-offender husband stated:

It's been a rollercoaster. It's been both highs and lows, good times and bad times. I've been to the point to I wish he would go back. I watched this family just fall apart in some ways.

A Parent of the ex-offender son stated:

Well, I had to dig deep to muster enough strength to help him. My son is 37 years old and I resented that fact that I had to take care of a grown man, but at the same time I knew he needed my help to get him on his feet.

A Sibling with an ex-offender brother stated:

It was good. We would hang out and stuff. You know on the weekends my mother and one of my sisters and me would hang out from the time we finished breakfast...we would go shopping to the mall and stuff, so we would bring along my brother. He was hanging out with us. On Sunday mornings...he started going to church and then going to dinner after church was over, so him being home was great.

An Adult Child of an Ex-offender father responded:

There was a lot of frustration. My father just won't change and when I look back at my behavior, I can easily call myself an idiot for the things I did for my father,

helping him to get on his feet. It was hard you know when you try do stuff for other people just out of kindness, and they show no appreciation for what you have done for them.

What type of resources did you use to help you cope with the return of your ex-offender family member?

A Spouse of ex-offender husband stated:

I pretty much used the same resources as before you know like talking to my sisters and friends. There were no community resources, so I just did what I knew to help him fit back into the family. It was hard though.

A Parent of an ex-offender daughter stated:

I was happy to have my daughter home, but I didn't know of any community resources to help both me and her cope with her being back. The church helped some, but for the most part I just turned to the other family members to help me.

An Adult Daughter of an ex-offender mother stated:

I didn't use any community resources because there was none I knew about. But I did talk to my best friend a lot. Without her, I think I would have pulled me hair out.

What would you share with a family member to help them cope with having an ex-offender family member return from incarceration?

A Spouse of an ex-offender husband stated:

I would tell them to pray a lot and get with people going through the same things you are going through. I will tell them not to put t much pressure on the ex-offender such as telling them to get a job, do something with themselves only after they have been home a sort period of time. I would also tell them to set limits and boundaries of what they are willing to do and put up with, and stand firm on these boundaries. Because if you don't you will find yourself miserable and making scarf ices you really don't want to make.

A Parent of an ex-offender son replied:

I would say prepare yourself for a big change. Because the person that left may not be the same person that came back. Prepare yourself for the outburst that involves anger from the person. I would say prepare yourself for the conversations; for withdrawal, they may become vocal. Sometime they may be warm and cunning at the same time because I think you when you been in an environment that foster pure survival to going back to a different environment that doesn't have those kind of survival issues, the person coming home will bring the behavior he participate in prison back to the family home. It would be important for the family members to listen to the ex-offender instead of being forceful in your communications and conversations. I recall there many times my son wanted to say something, but I was steadily talking. Don't bring attention to the things they do because you do it different, such as washing clothes in a bucket. Eventually, they will stop that prison behavior and adjust back into society.

A Sibling stated of an ex-offender brother stated:

I would tell them to be honest with yourself and understand the things you can and cannot do when considering bringing the ex-offender to your home. I would have loved for my brother to come over and lived with me, but I'm on a pretty tight budget and couldn't really afford to take care of someone else. My mother always complains how high her utilities have gone up since he's been there, or she talks about how much he eats and how expensive groceries are. My mother is retired living on a fixed income as well, and even though she is taking care of my brother, we all pitch in to help as well.

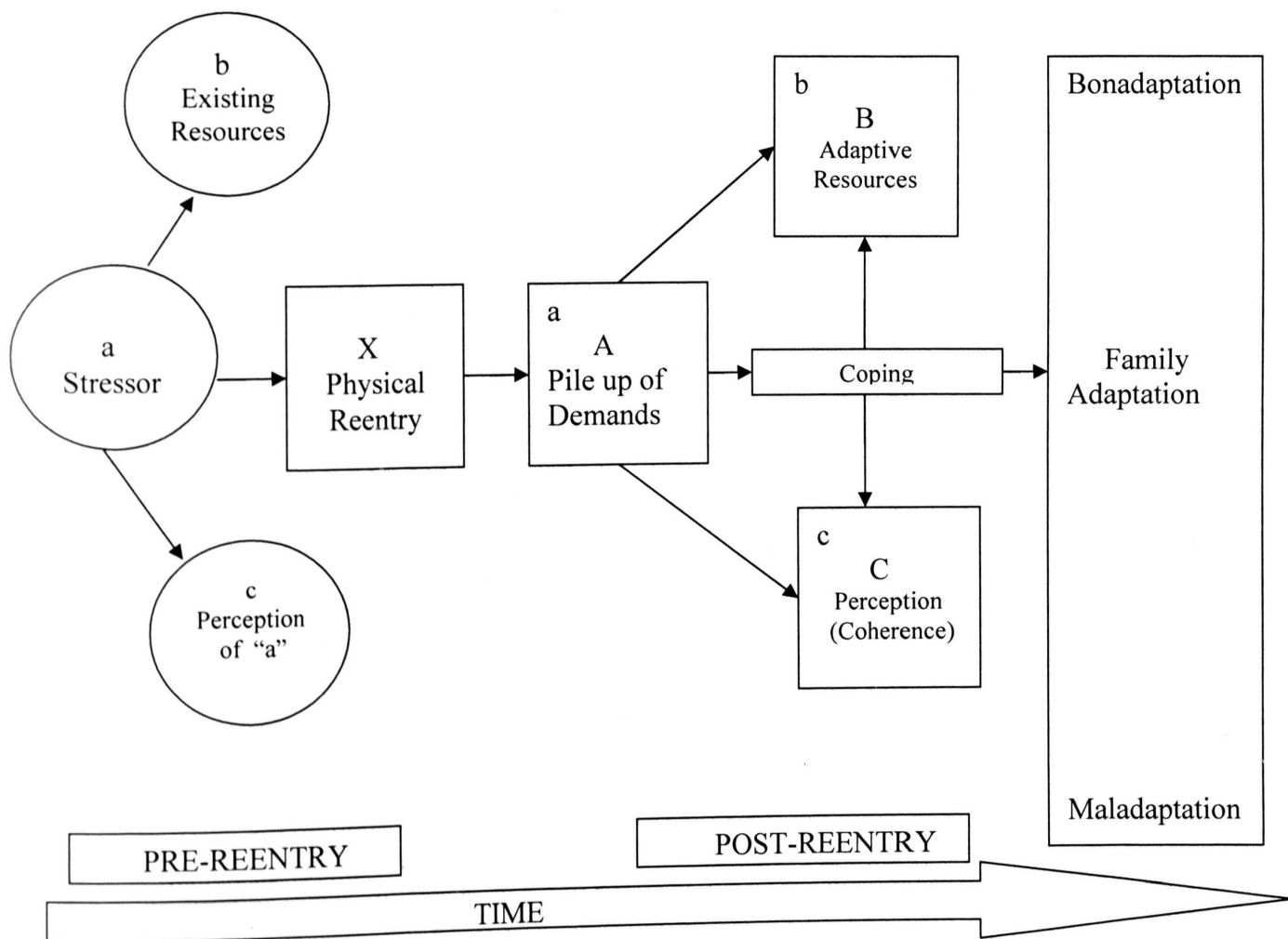
An Adult Son of an ex-offender father stated:

I would say to other family members that most of these people who come out of prison are more likely to go back. I don't really have a problem with people helping them out. I would definitely tell them to stay on their toes. I would also say to them that they should expect to be disappointed in some form or fashion. I know that there are a lot of families out there who think that it is going to be better when they come out of prison. But, it is likely that the person hadn't changed at all.

APPENDIX I

The Double ABCX Model of Family Stress, Adjustment, and Adaptation

THE DOUBLE ABCX MODEL OF FAMILY STRESS, AJUSTMENT, AND ADAPATATION



EX-OFFENDER NOTIFICATION

EX- OFFENDER REENTRY

Continuous

APPENDIX J

Instruments

F-COPES

FAMILY CRISIS ORIENTED PERSONAL EVALUATION SCALES

Hamilton I. McCubbin

David H. Olson

Andrea S. Larsen

Purpose

The Family Crisis Oriented Personal Evaluation Scales is designed to record problem-solving attitudes and behavior which families develop to respond to problems or difficulties.

Directions

First, read the list of "Response Choices" one at a time. Second, decide how well each statement describes your attitudes and behaviors in response to problem or difficulties. If the statement describes response very well, the circle the number 5 indicating that you strongly agree; the if the statement describes your responses to some degree, then select a number 2, 3 or 4 to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement about your responses.

Please circle a number (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) to match your response to each statement. Thank you!!!

When we face problems or difficulties in our family we respond by:	Strongly disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Sharing our difficulties with relatives	1	2	3	4	5
2. Seeking encouragement and support from friends	1	2	3	4	5
3. Knowing we have the power to solve major problems	1	2	3	4	5
4. Seeking information and advices from persons in other families who have faced the same or similar problems	1	2	3	4	5
5. Seeking advice from relatives (grandparents, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

When we face problems or difficulties in our family we respond by:	Strongly disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Seeking advice from relatives (grandparents, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
7. Seeking assistance from community agencies and programs designed to help families in our situation	1	2	3	4	5
8. Knowing that we have the strength within our won family to solve problems.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Receiving gifts and favors from neighbors (e.g. food, taking in the mail, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Seeking information and advisor from the family doctor	1	2	3	4	5
11. Asking neighbors for favors and assistance	1	2	3	4	5
12. Facing problems “head-on” and trying to get a solution right away	1	2	3	4	5
13. Watching television	1	2	3	4	5
14. Showing that we are strong	1	2	3	4	5
15. Attending church services	1	2	3	4	5
16. Accepting stressful events as a fact of life	1	2	3	4	5
17. Sharing concerns with close friends	1	2	3	4	5
18. Knowing luck plays a big part in how well we are able to solve family problems	1	2	3	4	5
19. Exercising with friends to stay fit and reduce tension	1	2	3	4	5
20. Accepting that difficulties occur unexpectedly	1	2	3	4	5
21. Doing things with relatives (get together, dinners, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

When we face problems or difficulties in our family we respond by:	Strongly disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
22. Seeking professional counseling and help for family difficulties	1	2	3	4	5
23. Believing that we can handle our own problems	1	2	3	4	5
24. Participating in church activities	1	2	3	4	5
25. Defining the family problem in a more positive way so that we do not become too discouraged	1	2	3	4	5
26. Asking relatives how they feel about the problems we face	1	2	3	4	5
27. Feeling that no matter what we do to prepare, we will have difficulty handling problems	1	2	3	4	5
28. Seeking advice from a minister	1	2	3	4	5
29. Believing if we wait long enough, the problem will go away	1	2	3	4	5
30. Sharing problems with a neighbor	1	2	3	4	5
31. Having faith in God	1	2	3	4	5

FHI

Family Hardiness Index

Marilyn A. McCubbin

Hamilton I. McCubbin

Anne L. Thompson

Directions:

Please read each statement below and decide to what degree each describes your family. Is the statement False(0), Mostly False (1), Mostly True (2),or True (3) about your family? Circle a number 0 to 3 to match your feelings about each statement. Please respond to each and every statement.

In our family...	False	Mostly False	Mostly True	True
1. Trouble results from mistakes we make	0	1	2	3
2. It is not wise to plan ahead and hope	0	1	2	3
3. because things do not turn out anyway				
5. Our work and effort are not appreciated no matter how hard we try and work	0	1	2	3
6. In the long run, the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good things that happens to us	0	1	2	3
7. We have a sense of being strong even when we face bug problems	0	1	2	3
8. Many times I feel I can trust that even in difficult times things will work out	0	1	2	3
9. While we don't always agree , we can count on each other to stand by us in times of need	0	1	2	3
10. We do not feel we can survive if another problem hits us	0	1	2	3
11. We believe that things will work out for the better if we work together as a family	0	1	2	3
12. Life seems dull and meaningless	0	1	2	3

In our family...	False	Mostly False	Mostly True	True
13. We strive together and help each other no matter what	0	1	2	3
14. When our family plans activities we try new and exciting things	0	1	2	3
15. We listen to each others' problems, hurts and fears	0	1	2	3
16. We trend to do the same things over and over...it's boring	0	1	2	3
17. We seem to encourage each other to try new things with others	0	1	2	3
18. It is better to stay at home than go out and do things with others	0	1	2	3
19. Being active and learning new things are encouraged	0	1	2	3
20. We work together to solve problems	0	1	2	3
21. Most of the unhappy things that are due to bad luck	0	1	2	3
22. We realize our lives are controlled by accidents and luck	0	1	2	3

APPENDIX K

Community Resources

Community & Mental Health Resources

Legacy Counseling Inc.
4054 McKinney Ave.
Dallas, TX
Phone: 214-520-6308
Website: www.legacycounseling.org

Welcome House Inc.
4202 South Lancaster Rd.
Dallas, TX 75216
Phone: 214-421-3948—Website: www.thewelcomehouse.org

Dallas County Health & Human Services
2377 N. Stemmons Freeway
Dallas, TX 75207
Phone: 214-819-2000—Website: www.dallascounty.org

Urban League
4315 S. Lancaster Rd.
Dallas, TX 75204
Phone: 214-915-4600—Website: www.ulgdnctx.com

LaSima
3304 Camp Wisdom Rd.
Dallas, TX 75237
Phone: 972-283-3354—Website: www.thelasimafoundation.org

Way Back House
6211 Denton Dr.
Dallas, TX 75234
Phone: 214-352-5674

Dallas County Treatment
123 Colorado Blvd.
Dallas, TX 75203
Phone: 214-946-5540—Website: www.methadonetreatment.com

APPENDIX L

Support Letter



23 April 2010

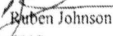
To Whom This May Concern,

Shelia Lumar has requested permission to use Cedar Valley College campus classrooms to conduct interviews for a dissertation project from May 1st—Nov. 1st, 2010. As the Executive Dean for the Business, Information and Technology, I am pleased to support Ms. Lumar in her research efforts and grant her permission to use the campus classrooms during the time frame as mentioned above.

Ms. Lumar will need to coordinate meeting times with the administrative assistant 48-hrs prior to the start of the meeting.

If you need more information, please feel to contact me at rjohnson@dcccd.edu or by phone 972-860-8121.

Sincerely,


Ruben Johnson
CVC
Executive Dean

3030 North Dallas Avenue, Lancaster, Texas 75134
Phone: 972/860-8201
www.dcccd.edu/cvc/cvc.htm

Member of the Dallas County Community College District