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Understanding My Role as an Art Therapist in the Prison System

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COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

UNDERSTANDING MY ROLE AS AN ART THERAPIST
IN THE PRISON SYSTEM

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To my family who has not only inspired me but supported my every step on my journey.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	vi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
CHAPTER THREE: METHOD.....	25
CHAPTER FOUR: AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING.....	30
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	57
References.....	63
Biographical Sketch.....	69

ABSTRACT

Incarceration is a major problem in the United States. It is a very complex system influenced by politics, ethnicity, poverty, social justice issues, and collective human experiences. Despite its complexities, its understanding by the general public is simplified and sensationalized by the media—prison, its workers, and residents are usually negatively stereotyped and stigmatized. The idea of incarceration only becomes tangible and familiar when a family member or friend that is close to you is directly affected. For this thesis I use the qualitative research method—autoethnography—to present personal narratives about my experiences as a family member affected by incarceration, and as a Master’s Degree art therapy student who has various experiences working with the prison/correctional system. Through the reflections of my personal narratives coupled with the collective works and studies completed within the correctional system, I can discuss the realities that surround the correctional system that the general public may not otherwise know. And through the use of autoethnography, I’m afforded the space to discuss the very pressing need for more research in correctional settings that will effectively change the prison system and how an art therapist like myself can begin to create change.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Despite the latest scrutiny of the American justice system and its approach to incarceration due to shows such as *Orange is the New Black*; the spotlight on damaged race relations influenced by excessive police brutality; and President Obama's push for prison reforms before his term ends. Prisons today remain overcrowded and dangerous. They're certainly not places where the word "therapeutic" would be used to describe them. Literature has stated overcrowding in prisons and confining individuals with varying levels of mental stability in the same space causes the prison environment to be dangerous and non-therapeutic (Cullen et. al. 2012; Gussak, 1997).

Other authors (Ginn, 2012; Walmsley, 2007) suggested that prison environments are dangerous and non-therapeutic because of racial conflict, exposure to illicit drugs, violence, victimization, and the nature of gangs. These factors can contribute to the development of psychopathic traits in prisoners, or the worsening of already existing mental problems. This, in turn, leads to criminal and aggressive behaviors born out of a need to survive in a hostile prison atmosphere. Statistics collected by the Bureau of Justice show that offenders released from prison reenter prison after three years, on average. The inmates who are released and return to prison are steadily and increasingly committing violent crimes (Bureau of Justice, 2014). Because of the environment of prison, a cycle of recidivism is created.

As a person with a family member who has been in and out of a prison facility for eleven years, I can state from personal experience that recidivism is a problem that affects not only the inmate but his or her family. Addressing the proclivity towards violent behaviors in correctional institutions is vital to promote the reduction of recidivism. Correctional facilities are ill-equipped to reduce recidivism, lacking the tools to both rehabilitate inmates and facilitate their reentry into society. Prisons and correctional facilities need a rehabilitation system that works. Cullen et al. (2012, p. 78) said "We do not like hospitals that do not cure or schools that do not educate. And we should not like prisons that do not rehabilitate." More focus should be on developing effective rehabilitation procedures that decrease re-offenses once inmates are released. Numerous studies have researched effective ways to treat inmates and reduce recidivism (Hollin & Palmer, 2009; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, Chapman, & Landenberger, 2001;

Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002; Wilson, Bouffard, & Mackenzie, 2005). Most of the successful models were based on cognitive and behavioral approaches, which helped inmates develop appropriate social, problem-solving, self-control, and stress-reducing skills. Art therapy also proved useful as a successful treatment for the inmates, because the inmates were already using art as a means of creative expression and coping in their environment (Ursprung, 1997).

Recent studies have shown that art therapy is effective in reducing maladaptive behaviors, depression, and aggression, and in introducing positive coping skills to inmates (Breiner et. al., 2102; Gussak, 2009). The original intent of this thesis was to explore the relationship between art therapy and maladaptive behaviors in inmates. My hypothesis was “If an inmate participates in a cognitive behavioral art therapy treatment than their incidents of hostile aggression will decrease.” But due to certain factors such as difficulties entering a prison to conduct the study and the lack of time available to undergo a thorough IRB process have caused this thesis to evolve. My thesis has now become an Autoethnography that explores my personal experiences with the correctional system. My experiences include having a family member in prison, interning at a juvenile delinquent facility, and trying to conduct research in a prison setting. Through these personal narratives, I hope to add to the literature and context surrounding the prison system. My goal is for my experiences to enlighten the next art therapist trying to conduct research in a prison or correctional setting, so they have a better understanding of the prison population, and to provide a framework to begin the task of research within a prison.

Context of Study

In the year 2013 alone, 2.3 million people were in American jails and prisons, making the United States the most incarcerated nation on the planet (Glaze & Parks, 2014). About 4.8 million adults in 2013 were on probation or parole, making in total about 7 million adults who were under correctional supervision in that year. Sustaining the large population of the prison system costs the United States \$74 billion dollars (Kyckelhahn, 2011). It takes some state prisons an average of \$31,286 to lock up just one young person for a year. Because of recidivism, there is a 67% chance that same young person will return to the very same system after three years; 76.6% chance after five years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014; Henrichson & Delaney, 2012).

Among the many incarcerated, people of color, specifically poor people of color, overwhelmingly make up the population. In the United States, including countries like Canada and England, black men are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system

(Warde, 2013). After my experience working with juvenile delinquents and beginning to read about male inmates, I started to notice firsthand that the disproportionate representation of people of color was very accurate. As an intern, most of my clients were young men of color. I came to discover that they had lived lives riddled with neglect, abuse, trauma, victimization, disengagement from school, a lack of trust for authority, and abject poverty. In my short experience, the faces and the circumstances behind the millions of individuals represented in the statistics began to take shape; I could no longer look at them as statistics. The treatment of these persons as a population is a social justice issue that should not be ignored because people of color *are* so disproportionately affected. Being a person of color (African-American) myself, with a black male family member in prison, and working with young men of color in correctional facilities, ignited a passion in me. I was overcome with the urge to help these young, and adult men locked up in facilities that did not help rehabilitate them but instead instilled more criminalized ways of thinking. I wanted to work on the “inside” and change the “system.”

According to Austin and colleagues, prison studies have put much emphasis on new ways to identify, rationalize, differentiate, and categorize different types of crimes and offenders, but neglects the bigger picture; the human element and larger societal structures that are in place that causes these young men to offend (2001). This thesis hopes to remedy this by looking at the justice system through a social perspective lens and matching faces and human experiences to the statistics. To promote awareness of the strain prison growth and recidivism puts on society and the many people affected, specifically men of color.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is two-fold: (1) to give cultural context and provide a richer understanding of the literature through narratives of my personal experiences as a person of color with the justice system and (2) enlighten future art therapists to continue research in a prison/correctional setting. Each purpose will be fulfilled through the identification of the need for more research in prisons as well as the sharing my personal account of attempting to start research in a prison facility. This autoethnography hopes to provide a template for a future art therapist. By providing art therapists with examples of what they could do by discussing what has been done in prison by other therapists and art therapists. And what they should do to be

more culturally and socially attuned to the major social issue that surrounds the prison and justice system: the overrepresentation of people of color in prisons.

Justification: Why More Prison Research?

As stated in the context of the study, offenders who are released from prison reenter after three years; the prison subculture continues to perpetuate aggressive behaviors that can lead to more criminal behavior (Cullen et. al., 2012; Ginn, 2012; Walmsley, 2007; Worrall & Morris, 2012). And due to their environment, correctional facilities are ill-equipped to reduce the inclination of aggressive acts in inmates or facilitate their re-entry into society, creating a cycle of re-offending inmates. Numerous research has been done in prisons, and yet recidivism remains an issue. In the history of U.S prisons, there are disproportionate numbers of African Americans in prisons and overwhelming incarceration rates of African Americans continue today (Graber, 2013). This autoethnography will reflect on my personal experiences with the justice system as an art therapy student as well as a person of color to shed light on the pressing need for reform, introduce new ways to implement treatment, and how prisons affect a particular population, people of color.

Justification: Why an Autoethnography?

The original intent of my study was to show that change can be made in correctional settings and inmates through the use of art therapy. But as mentioned earlier the purpose of this study needed to evolve due to various factors. But I still wanted to create change or show that change could be made. Because my thesis chair and committee knew how passionate, I was about the prison population they suggested that I take my thesis in the direction of using autoethnography as a method.

For the purpose of this paper, autoethnography is defined as a qualitative research approach that allows the author or researcher to draw from his or her life experiences written in the form of personal narratives to extend new knowledge (Sparkes, 2000). Autoethnographies “are highly personalized accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for extending sociological understanding” (Ellis et. al, 2011 p. 21). According to Ellis and colleagues, researchers who write autoethnographic works seek to write compelling descriptions of their personal and interpersonal experiences (Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P., 2011). To write such powerful descriptions, a researcher must identify patterns of cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interviews, and artifacts, and then describe these patterns using

storytelling and narratives. Thus a researcher, through using autoethnography as a method, is able “to make personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging. By producing accessible texts, she or he may be able to reach a wider and more diverse mass audience that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011 para.14). Using autoethnography as a method would become what I needed to create change.

Research Questions

Some guiding research questions for this study are: (1) what are some of the obstacles and difficulties in establishing structured research within the prison population? And (2) what can an art therapist begin to do to produce a change in the correctional system and produce a change in inmates? These questions will further be examined and explored by the sub-question: Why is it that so many people of color enter the prison system? Each question will be discussed and answered through the analysis and reflection of my experiences within correctional settings.

Overview of Study

As aforementioned this study will be using autoethnography as a method to analyze personal narratives and reflect on them. As an African-American, I understand the walls and hurdles that are put in front of me because of my skin color. But because I am fortunate enough to be able to afford an education and pursue a master’s degree, I recognize the duty I have to my community, to give a voice to the voiceless, to give a voice to the other people of color who can’t talk, yet alone, fully grasp and understand the everyday injustices they face. Through my education I’ve come to realize the overt and subversive obstacles placed in front of people of color in America. I saw how the prison population is overlooked, saw the connection between racial disparities and the justice system, and learned that there is an abundance of literature explaining why the justice system doesn’t work, but not enough explaining how to improve the system, especially in the field of art therapy. Because I have come to understand the complicated relationship between people of color and the prison system through my studies, I feel it necessary for my narratives to come from my time as a student. This study will consist of three narratives titled “Eyes Opened,” “The Camp Life,” and “Red Tape.” Each narrative will provide a short story that embodies an epiphany of sorts for me, moments during my education that pushed me to think and question the justice system and what it means to be a person of color. Each narrative

will be followed by a reflection that will synthesize them with relevant literature and answer the guiding research questions of this study.

Conclusion

The original purpose of this study was to add to the body of literature on prison rehabilitation services aimed at reducing an inmate's inclination to use violence. The study hoped to demonstrate a more efficient way of rehabilitation; providing offenders with the knowledge they may use while in prison and carry over with them when they re-enter society. As mentioned earlier, the study evolved into an autoethnography due to varying circumstances. As an autoethnography, it will now facilitate a richer understanding of prisons by presenting a more culturally attuned point of view through the investigation of the guiding research questions.

Through the reflection and analysis of my personal experiences with correctional settings, my goal of this autoethnography will be to identify the need for more research to push future art therapists to continue to conduct research in correctional settings. It is the aim of the autoethnography to provide a template for a future art therapist of what they could do differently, things they should be prepared for, and ways to be more culturally and socially attuned to social issues that surround the prison and justice system when conducting research.

The following chapter will review the many facets of prison, treatment options in prison, and research in prison, to lay a foundation of support for the underlying reasons and goals for this autoethnography.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will continue to contain examinations of the original study. However, the literature review has evolved out of the need to discuss the difficulties of conducting research in prisons, and the use of autoethnography as a method of study in the criminal justice system.

The literature review will provide a brief overview of the history of prisons, discuss the setting and population, how the environment produces more criminal behavior (i.e. aggressive behaviors in inmates), and how anger plays a role in aggression. The chapter will then review treatment in correctional facilities which will include: a brief overview of traditional treatment in prisons, how art therapy treatment has been implemented as a stand-alone treatment as well as an adjunct to conventional treatment, and the difficulties of implementing treatment in prisons. The chapter will then conclude with a discussion about the challenges that thwart the introduction of research in prisons and discuss a new school of thought, Convict Criminology; using Autoethnography methods to discuss, critique, and promote innovative ways of research and change in the prison system.

Brief History of Prison Settings and the Population

History has shown that forms of legal punishment have existed in the past, but imprisonment didn't become a primary form of punishment until the 1790's (Morris & Rothman, 1995). During the 1790's to about 1825 American prisons stressed reformation and rehabilitation over punishment (Schmallegger, 2009). But by 1825, there was a shift in the philosophy of how to treat criminals. Prisons became privately run and owned and were used to house people of both sexes, all ages, socioeconomic standing, and mental health levels. These prisons were usually congested, unkempt facilities where the prisoners were neglected and abused (Morris & Rothman, 1995).

Also after the first American prisons had been built, it sparked the building of prisons everywhere worldwide (Graber, 2013). By the 18th century in the United States, prisons were being constructed at a rapid rate and were very unstructured and chaotic; lacking rules (Meskell,

1999). Throughout prison history, there was a back and forth between the old prison philosophy ideals of rehabilitation and ideas of retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence (Schmallegger, 2009). Unfortunately, the ideas of retribution, incapacitation, and deterrence prevailed through prison history. And by the late 1960s due to the changes in political, social, and racial events, the focus on healthcare and the wellbeing of inmates declined and the focus shifted back to harsher punishment and stricter methods of social control (Morris & Rothman, 1995; Schmallegger, 2009). Also, prisons in the United States have been deeply affected by the history of slavery and race relations. Because of slavery and its ripple effects through time, a vast and a disproportionate number of African Americans are still incarcerated today. (Graber, 2013).

Present Penal Systems

Due to the shift in focus from healthcare and the wellbeing of inmates to harsher punishment and a growing public demand for tougher criminal penalties, an extensive sentencing reform was triggered. According to Langan (1991):

Prisons were no longer solely for rehabilitating offenders, but also served punitive functions: retribution (certain crimes deserve imprisonment), incapacitation (prison bars prevent the offender from committing new crimes against the public), and deterrence (the threat of imprisonment inhibits people from committing crimes). (Served, para. 3)

Langan demonstrated that due to the shift in focus on the wellbeing of inmates the functions of prisons became more about punishing prisoners rather than rehabilitating them. Because of the change in focus, prisons prison populations are on the rise globally. According to Walmsely (2007), prison populations in many countries have drastically surpassed population growth. He stated that one shouldn't assume the drastic increase is because of higher crime rates. But actually because of concerned communities that lead to the creation of new laws and politicians wanting to prove that they are tough on crime .Specifically, the significant increase in the prison population in the United States is due to new reforms such as mandatory sentencing laws, longer sentences, and parole boards keeping felons behind bars longer, as well as, stricter drug policies due to the war on drugs. Due to the new reforms and our communities and culture believing that prison is for retribution, the United States locks up more citizens than any other nation on earth (Langan 1991; Walmsley, 2007). The U.S only has five percent of the world's population but has 25 percent of the world's prison population (Kirchoff, 2010). The United States prison population rose by 700 percent from 1970 to 2005, a rate that is higher than the

general population growth, which increased by 44 percent (Warren J. et. al, 2008). Today's prisons are now so overcrowded and can no longer facilitate and hold offenders, let alone, rehabilitate one; according to Walmsley (2007), "rehabilitation efforts become nearly impossible" (p.31).

Inmate Demographics and Prison Culture

Due to the sharp increase in the prison population, the prison population consists of a wide variety of people, spanning from different age groups, ethnicities, backgrounds, mental health issues, and the types of crimes committed. According to Langan (1991), despite the variety of inmates in prison, males, blacks, and persons in their twenties are highly overrepresented in prisons and are usually referred to as the "prison-prone population" (p. 1569). More than 60 percent of the people in prison today are people of color; 33.6 percent are Caucasian, 35.8 are African American, 21.6 are Hispanic, and 9 percent are other. (Carson, 2015). The lifetime likelihood of imprisonment for an African American man is one in three compared to one in seventeen for Caucasian men and one in six for Latino men (Bonczar, 2003). Besides the racial disparities, a recent study by the U.S. Department of Justice (2014) found that more than half of all prison inmates have a mental health problem compared to the 11 percent that is a part of the general population. Roberts (2014) indicated that prisoners have at least one type of mental health problem because prisons have many risk factors such as being isolated from support networks, bullying from other inmates, drug misuse, limited opportunity to engage in something meaningful, and uncertainty about the future. But despite these facts, the history, and the ideas of retribution and deterrence has designed prisons to detain, and house offenders; leaning away from rehabilitation efforts (Ginn, 2012).

The prison environment over time has become very dangerous and nontherapeutic. Because of reasons such as overfilled facilities, the mixture of persons of different mental health and developmental levels, the common nature of gangs in prisons, racial conflict, exposure to illicit drugs, violence, and victimization. (Cullen et. al. 2012; Ginn, 2012, Gussak, 1997; Walmsley 2007). Due to the prison environment being dangerous as well as its many restrictions on fundamental personal freedoms, inmates may develop psychopathic traits or worsen already existing problems, which will lead to more criminal, aggressive, and violent behaviors. According to R. N. Ristad Jr. (2008), we criminalize things that are not accepted or treated as social or medical issues when the reality is no more than 25 percent of prisoners are in prison for

violence. In spite of these numbers, according to Daniel (2007), only one in three prison inmates receive any form of mental health treatment.

Because of the harsh environment, the diverse demographics, and the isolation of correctional facilities to the outside world, inmates out of necessity create rules, regulations, and codes they must follow to govern their everyday lives in prison; they create a culture for themselves (Trammell, 2012). They create a culture within the constraints of a prison, also known as a total institution, which is an enclosed place where people share all aspects of their daily lives without privacy (Schmallegger, 2009). In prison, the culture consists of an informal language, norms, beliefs, attitudes, values, and lifestyles of the prison inmates. Surprisingly, studies show that prison subcultures are consistent in U.S. correctional facilities (Schmallegger, 2009).

The development of prison culture stems from both criminal culture and social deprivation (Trammell, 2012). Criminal culture is the values, beliefs, criminal ways of thinking, history of violence or aggression, troubled backgrounds, and complex needs the inmates admitted into prison bring with them. And social deprivation includes the feelings of powerlessness, stigmatization, a loss of material goods, and the need to establish status and increase self-esteem and control as a response to the experiences of imprisonment (Tew et al., 2015). One aspect of prison culture is that it involves an inverted status hierarchy that values certain behaviors and activities that are judged by the law. For example, a cop killer is looked down upon in society, but in a men's maximum security prison, he is one of the most influential, respected, and admired by other inmates (Hassine & Wright, 1996). Society condemns drug dealers or members of gangs, but they occupy positions of importance and power in prison. The prison subculture is so unique in comparison to common societal standards; new inmates must adapt to a new way of life. New inmates adjusting to prison is known as prisonization (Schmallegger, 2009). Prisonization is the process through which new inmates learn and become accustomed to the prison subculture. For many prisoners, the prisonization process involves determining the statuses and roles of various inmates and staff because status and hierarchy play an important part in prison.

An additional significant facet of the penitentiary culture is the prison code and the application of violence to enforce the code (Schmallegger, 2009; Trammell, 2012). The code is the informal rulebook that consists of values and beliefs distinctive to prisons that inmates use as

an informal way of organization amongst themselves (Sykes and Messinger, 1960). Prison Code is based on loyalty to other inmates and distrust of the penitentiary staff. One well-known prison study by Sykes and Messinger identified five central elements of the prison code (1960). The elements are: (1) Don't interfere with other inmates or tell on other inmates/ "snitch." (2) Mind your own business. (3) Don't whine or complain. (4) Do not take advantage other inmates, and always keep your word. And (5) don't trust correctional officers or staff. Inmates are socialized to follow these rules, and in doing so, they must act tough, not interfere with other inmates, and not befriend correctional officers.

A study by Trammell (2012) examined how former inmates discussed the nuances of prison norms and the code and how violence and the need to be tough was used a social process. The study provided evidence that the former inmates used violence to maintain norms and gain power. The inmates that were interviewed during the study described violence as the only way to get justice or peace in prison. Prison culture and the prison code breeds violence and condones violence to keep order, making violence a symbol of strength and power in an environment where inmates do not possess any real or genuine power of their own (Trammell, 2012). The final facet of prison culture also includes a unique language or slang used among prisoners. The slang is used to describe objects, people, and specific types of inmates. For example ace deuce means best friend, banger a knife, billy means white man, Chester means child molester, man walking was to signal a guard is coming, and tree jumper means a rapist (Schmallegger, 2009).

Aggression

Because of the structure, demographics and culture of correctional institutions, inmate conflict and violence has been attributed to three reasons: deprivation, genetic/personal factors, and environmental/situational factors. Deprivation refers to the loss of traditional freedoms an inmate experiences in prison. Genetic and personal factors relate to their predisposed conditions, values, and beliefs that they bring into the correctional setting. And the situational/ environmental factors apply to the systems of hierarchy and formal organizations, (i.e. the culture) in prison settings (Worrall & Morris, 2012). These explanations or factors, biological, psychological, and social or situational, correlate with the factors that research on aggressive behaviors focus on (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). These factors are said to play a role and contribute to the development and preservation of aggressive behavior. And can influence the

way an inmate may handle day to day situations in prison setting such as whom they associate with and trust as well as their actions towards others (Worrall & Morris, 2012).

Due to the many elements that contribute to the development of aggression, it is hard to define aggressive behaviors and identify its different forms of expression. Tremblay (2000), described aggressive behaviors as socially undesirable behaviors because aggression often occurs with antisocial behaviors such as delinquency, substance abuse, and non-compliance to authoritative figures. But Tremblay also stated that aggressive behaviors are not always antisocial, for example, one can aggressively work towards a goal. So to begin to define aggression one must think of the intent for the use of aggression. Tremblay (2000), states that if there is the intent to harm an individual, then the behavior can be considered violent or antisocial. Aggression is defined, for the sake of this paper, as any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm either physically or verbally; accidental harm is not aggressive because it is not intended (Anderson & Bushman 2002).

The Development of Aggression or Risk Factors: GAM Model

A recent theory on the development of aggression is called the general aggression model (GAM) and was designed by Anderson and Bushman (2002). The theory was developed to integrate the existing theories of aggression into a holistic theory and to better understand the development of aggression and the role of anger in aggression. As stated earlier aggression research has focused on the biological, environmental, psychological, and social factors that influence aggressive behavior. The GAM model is an integration of these factors that also takes into the account the internal factors (individual), and the external factors (the situation the individual finds themselves in). The GAM model was created to be a useful framework for the understanding of aggression and to be used as an aid in the development of interventions for aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Genetic and Personal Factors. Genetic factors play a significant role in the development of aggression because according to Pettit (2004), “Some children inherit from their parent’s traits and characteristics that may be directly involved in the development of criminality and violent behavior (e.g., aggressiveness, attention deficits).” (p. 195) Genetic factors also may indirectly instigate some of the environmental risk conditions known to be associated with antisocial behavior. For example, a child who is genetically predisposed to be short-tempered

may induce adverse treatment from his or her family and peers. Genetic predispositions also may also be affected or activated by environmental factors. For example, for someone who is predisposed to antisocial behaviors, his or her behaviors may only be displayed when the environmental risk is high (Pettit, 2004).

Personal factors include all the characteristics a person brings to a situation, such as personality traits, attitudes, beliefs, values, and includes genetic predispositions. Personal factors are stable and consistent across time and situations because an individual's values and beliefs usually never change; personality is the result of a person's knowledge structures or cognitive schemas. Personal factors or an individual's knowledge structures, influence what situations a person will selectively seek out and what situations will be avoided; personal factors involve an individual's inclination to aggress (Anderson & Bushman, 2002). So if aggression is part of your personality or knowledge structure one may seek out situations or be placed in situations that will evoke aggressive behavior.

Social/Situational Factors. Situational factors include any important features of the situation, such as the presence of a provocation, pain or discomfort, incentives, frustration, drugs, and aggressive cues (e.g. guns and violent media). Like the personal factors, situational factors influence aggression by influencing cognition, affect, and arousal (Anderson & Bushman 2002). So an offender may or may not have been inclined to exhibit aggressive behaviors due to genetic and environmental factors when outside of a correctional facility. But due to the harsh social structure and environment of correctional facilities, an offender may develop aggressive behaviors or build upon already existing behaviors.

The Role of Anger in Aggression

According to DiGiuseppe and Tafrate (2001) anger has a duality. It is sometimes seen as something that needs controlling because it can be described as explosive and destructive. But can also be described as something that needs expression, because it can be seen as energizing and reasonable during specific situations (DiGiuseppe & Tafrate, 2001). Understanding anger is limited and challenging because there have been few studies that have explored all aspects of anger and scientific knowledge about anger is not entirely established and agreed upon (DiGiuseppe & Tafrate, 2001; Kassinove & Tafrate, 2011). This paper will define anger as a relationship between feelings, cognitions, and physiological reactions triggered or provoked by what can be perceived as threatening. Threatening meaning, a violation of some kind, insults,

unfair treatment, a feeling of being slighted or hurt intentionally, a thwarting or blockage to one's goal, or violations of one's goals (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Novaco, 2000). According to Novaco (2011), humans are hard-wired for anger because of its survival functions. Anger activation "is centrally linked to threat perceptions and survival responding" (Novaco, 2011, p. 651). When a person is in danger or perceives a threat, anger can mobilize physical and psychological resources, energize a person's behaviors, and produce feelings of determination. But the problem, according to Novaco, is that anger itself and what it mobilizes in a human being is not an issue but anger dysregulation - the frequency, reactivity, intensity, duration, and mode of expression of the anger is the problem (Novaco, 2011).

Through firsthand experience and research in the forensic settings, Novaco (2011) states that anger and its many variations; rage, hate, and revenge, are the underpinning emotions that drive violent behavior and violent offending. Anger can adversely affect logical thought processes, core relationships, work performance, and health. Cornell, Peterson, and Richards (1999), conducted research with incarcerated adolescents and found through self-rated and staff-rated reports that anger is predictive of physical and verbal aggression. The youths were given two self-report measures, the Novaco Anger Scale (NAS) and the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI), and also had their verbal and physical aggression monitored and recorded by staff for three months while they were incarcerated (Cornell, Peterson, & Richards, 1999). The study results supported the relationship between anger and aggression, but the anger measurements used, the NAS and the STAXI, did not show evidence in the prediction of institutional aggression beyond the information provided by a history of violent offenses.

According to Anderson and Busman (2002), anger plays five causal roles in aggression. (1) It reduces one's inhibitions against being aggressive, (2) it allows a person to stay aggressive over an extended period, (3) it is used as an information cue, (4) it primes aggressive thoughts, and (5) it energizes behavior. The first role of anger in aggression is that it reduces one's inhibitions against becoming aggressive; anger interferes with one's higher level of thinking. This interference affects their moral reasoning and judgment because anger provides a rational reason to be aggressive. The second role that anger plays in aggression is that anger allows a person to maintain their aggressive intentions over longer periods of time. One becomes more sensitive to provoking events because of the emotion anger. The feeling of being angry helps one to remember and hold onto particular inciting events that made them angry and aggressive.

Thirdly, anger is used as an information cue or trigger that helps one interpret a situation and helps one to react aggressively to a given situation. Fourthly, to prime aggressive thoughts, anger stimulates aggressive thoughts and behaviors. Fifthly, anger increases one's arousal levels, and aggressive behavior is likely to be energized by anger (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

The Treatment of Anger Related Disorders

The treatment of anger would focus on anger dysregulation- “the activation, expression, and experience of anger occurring without appropriate controls” (Novaco, 2011, p. 661). Anger treatment is limited because the majority of the literature on anger treatment has only been with behavioral, cognitive, or cognitive-behavioral therapies. DiGiuseppe and Tafrate (2001) recognized and concluded that after reviewing the five meta-analytic reviews of anger treatment to date, that if one wanted to successfully reduce anger that leads to aggressive behavior, treatment should be manualized, have structured interventions, and supervision to safeguard that treatment is delivered consistently.

Implementations of Traditional Treatment in Prison

As stated numerous throughout the introduction of this paper the proclivity of recidivism among offenders is very prominent and evident, so it is understandable that the primary goal of treatment for offenders is to reduce recidivism. Smith and Schweitzer (2012), identified factors that are predictors of recidivism:

antisocial attitudes, orientations, and values favorable to law violations and anti-criminal role models; antisocial peer associations; emotional and personality factors such as anger/hostility and lack of self-control; deficits in problem-solving skills; lack of social skills related to interpersonal conflict resolution; problems associated with alcohol/drug abuse; negative attitudes and/or poor performance in the area of education and employment; inadequate family affection, communication, or problem solving; and poor use of leisure time. (p. 16).

Numerous studies researched treatment that is effective in reducing recidivism (Hollin & Palmer, 2009; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005; Lipsey, Chapman, & Landenberger, 2001; Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002; Wilson, Bouffard, & Mackenzie, 2005). Some evidence-based strategies or models used to reduce recidivism are behavioral approaches that are based on classical and operant conditioning; social learning approaches and cognitive approaches

including cognitive skills training, problem-solving therapy, self-control procedures, and stress inoculation training (Smith & Schweitzer, 2012).

Implementing Art Therapy Treatment in Prisons

Daniel Maciel (2012) explained that artistic representations had been reported in deprived settings for a long time. These images range from scratches on a wall to body painting and tattooing. Art has been a critical element in prison settings for inmates due to the need for creative and artistic expression (Hanes, 2005). In the words of Ursprung (1997), “Prison art is as old as the prison itself. As a prison is a microcosm of society and society and culture cannot exist without art (culture’s reflection), art is inevitable in prison” (p. 18). Because art is a part of our culture, so in turn art becomes a part of prison culture; creativity rises with the need to self-express or reflect on one's culture. Art serves many purposes for inmates such as “transforming and beautifying their bleak environment, a means of escape to represent their desire for freedom, a way to create a sense of control over their lives, a way to avoid conflict, and is used as bargaining chips to exchange for everyday objects.” (Hall, 1997 p.28-39).

Although art serves many functions in prison, the creation of art is very challenging. Because necessary art materials are not readily available; “many materials are restricted due to security, high-risk reasons, and due to the environment being an environment to detain individuals and take away certain freedoms” (Hall, 1997 p.28). But despite the restrictive circumstances of the prison setting, the inmates still employ image making through creative resourcefulness to create art and endure and cope with their current circumstances (Hanes, 2005). In prisons where inmates are “outside” and distanced from mainstream culture and the art world, art becomes a primary need due to the very restrictive environment of prisons; the prison environment *encourages* creation (Schrift, 2006). The creation of art in prison almost seems integral and a necessary feature in what prison rehabilitation is trying to accomplish because art now becomes a *need* in prison, the art comes to hold therapeutic values to the inmates.

When analyzing the literature discussed in this chapter, the primary needs of the inmates are (1) to challenge values, attitudes, and behaviors that are maladaptive and (2) to offer inmates opportunities to feel they have some control over what happens to them day by day; to cope and endure. Addressing these two needs may reduce many of the risk factors that contribute to mental illness and recidivism. As stated earlier, creativity and artistic expression are already

prevalent in prison settings despite it being a challenging and non-therapeutic environment. Art Therapy can take advantage of this creativity that already exists in prisons by developing tasks or art therapy directives that evoke the expression of feelings and thoughts that would not have been discussed or revealed in any other form outside of art-making (Gussak, 1997). Art Therapy can uncover distinct nonverbal responses that oral therapy cannot reach. Art created during an art therapy session becomes “the ultimate hidden weapon” because art can hide the therapeutic process (Gussak, 1997, p. 61). Art Therapy will also enable inmates to express themselves freely without fear of negative reactions from their environment because,

Art Therapy does not require the inmate to discuss what his or her artwork has revealed because what has been revealed through the art is still understood by a trained art therapist who will help the inmate grapple with his problems on a valuable but unconscious level. (p. 2).

When art is used in a prison setting, an inmate can bridge the gap between thoughts and feelings. An inmate can begin to learn how to express themselves freely in a productive way as well as challenge maladaptive thoughts. An art therapist can use art as a means to help inmates understand how they perceive and process information affects how they feel and act.

Recent studies of art therapy in prison settings tested the effectiveness of art therapy and its use for redirecting maladaptive behaviors, such as aggression and depression. Through the studies, inmates were introduced to better tools to cope and handle situations to be beneficial to them in the prison environment and society after they leave prison (Gussak, 2009; Breiner et. al., 2102). The aim and goal of one particular study was to measure and test the effectiveness of art therapy in reducing depression and external locus of control (the degree of control that someone feels the “outside” or others have over their environment) in both male and female prison populations (Gussak, 2009). The findings supported the hypothesis that art therapy was beneficial in improving depressed mood and internal locus of control (the degree of control that someone feels he or she has over their environment (Gussak, 2009).

Another study done with serious juvenile offenders with DSM-IV-TR diagnoses, conducted by Persons (2009), asked the questions of what these young men’s psychological needs were and did the art therapy program address them as well as understanding what did the young men perceive as useful functions of art therapy. The focus of the art therapy program was for the young men to make meaning or sense of things, learn about themselves, enjoy

themselves, learn to be more proficient, and never give up on themselves or something they become a part of (Persons, 2009).

In the results of the study, eight themes were identified that showed the psychological needs of the young men through their artwork. The themes identified were: problems with identity, a need for security, a need for freedom, exploration, and fun. Need for a good model of familial relationships, a need for connections with others and affection, erotic and sexual needs. And to be able to express depression, childhood trauma, and other psychological problems, and religious or spiritual needs (Persons, 2009). The results demonstrated that the young men perceived that art therapy was helpful for stress relief and relaxation, reduction of boredom, pride, self-confidence, positive acknowledgment, increasing frustration tolerance, enjoyment, improvement of ability to concentrate, and the way they were treated.

Besides using art therapy as a stand-alone treatment in prison. There has also been a variety of studies and literature that has discussed the use of art therapy with traditional treatments, specifically cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) (Camic 1999; Malchiodi 2001; Rosal 2001; Steele and Raider, 2001; Turk, Meichenboum, Genest, 1983). This paper will present studies that were conducted to show art therapies compatibility with CBT, its adaptability when used with interventions such as CBT, and its effectiveness when used in a prison setting. A study by Sarid (2009), compared CBT and art therapy interventions when treating acute stress disorder (ASD). The results of the study found that although CBT and art therapy come from two very different theoretical orientations both treatments were compatible. Both CBT and art therapy were able to help a client create a deeper understanding and make connections between the relationship of the physical, emotional, and cognitive aspects of going through a traumatic experience. The study also found that when analyzing CBT and art therapy through their individual treatment plans of reducing physical and emotional stress and also through memory re-structuring, both interventions were able to bridge fragmented memories, change maladaptive and traumatic sensory processing, and reduce extreme arousal to triggers (Sarid, 2009).

A study conducted by Wilson (2003) used art therapy in addiction treatment. According to Wilson, addicts must learn to reorganize and identify (using CBT) their shame responses because shame plays a significant role in combating addiction because shame is seen as the foundation of addictive behaviors. They must also learn how to decrease cognitive distortions. According to Wilson (2003), understanding and logically thinking about thought processes was

not enough because CBT didn't allow a person to feel and reprocess where their shame was coming from. The study adapted art therapy to the twelve step alcohol anonymous program to have results that produced a more positive change in clients. The results showed that some clients experiences were too difficult to articulate, but with art therapy's adaptability to the twelve step program clients were able to process their individual experiences and gain a sense of self, understand their shame and denial, understand their addiction and begin to recover (Wilson, 2003).

A study done by Breiner and colleagues provided evidence that cognitive behavioral therapy and art therapy could be used as an effective way to rehabilitate inmates (Breiner et. al., 2102). The study took place in a prison in Wakulla County Florida where art therapy interns and a psychologist of the facility designed art therapy directives in conjunction with the cognitive behavioral management curriculum that was already put in place at the facility. Each art therapy directive was developed to address each of the CBT anger management curriculum sessions. (Breiner et. al., 2102). As well as designed to improve the anger management curriculum and to further the inmates' comprehension and retaining of the discussion topics during each session. During the therapy process, the art therapy directives were also designed to help the participant's access and manage their emotions.

In the study, there were three primary ways in which art therapy was found beneficial within the CBT format: (1) The art therapy techniques allowed the participants to fully engage in the therapy process by helping group members more deeply access emotions that were challenging and uncomfortable to express, (2) By calming participants who were nervous or distressed about being in the group or were experiencing unrelated stressors, and (3) the art therapy tasks were used to describe and complement the CBT material so that participants with varying learning styles, intellectual abilities, personality traits that may impact their ability to process the material could understand the material without much difficulty. The results of the study provided evidence that art therapy directives were consistent with the primary goals of CBT because the participants were able to understand how their thoughts and beliefs about themselves and others influence their behavior (Breiner et. al., 2102).

Barriers

The literature review so far has presented information about the mental health issues inmates may face, the population as a whole, the prison environment, and traditional treatment and art therapy treatment that is used in correctional settings. The literature review will now introduce the barriers that hinder the effectiveness and introduction of treatment within correctional settings (recruitment and coercion), as well as the barriers that make it difficult to conduct research within correctional settings (the vulnerability of prison inmates) and ways to remedy those barriers. The literature review will conclude with a discussion about convict criminology a new and innovative way to conduct research within correctional settings despite the obstacles to research.

Recruitment and Training of Treatment Staff

The successful treatment of inmates is difficult because of the lack of trained staff and counselors. Remote locations of prisons affect the hiring and training of competent treatment staff (Farabee, 1999). It is hard to locate and recruit qualified and experienced staff in the remote areas where prisons are typically built. Because new prisons are often built in rural communities, locating and hiring local individuals with prior training or experience with prison treatment is difficult (Farabee, 1999). Some training issues include understanding confidentiality, relapse prevention, co-occurring disorders, and cultural competence. A major training concern is the lack of gender training. Specifically, when working with men, counselors should focus on anger management and relational violence. Staff should learn theories of male development and explore key issues that influence men in prison such as substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, gender roles, family relationships, rage and violence, abuse and trauma, and educational and vocational issues they may have (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2005).

Also, staff need to become familiar with the prison culture specific to the program's geographic location. For example, direct care staff and counselors need to understand racial and gang issues, know the laws the inmate's created to govern themselves, and they must understand prison slang. To be able to improve the effectiveness of treatment and its administration, treatment providers must understand the operational responsibilities of the justice system, the importance of public safety in the setting, and security concerns (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2005). Knowledge and understanding of all these subjects will help staff to gain deeper insight into the barriers that may thwart successful treatment.

Coercion

Successful treatment of inmates is also problematic because the correctional population is different from your average client because most are involuntary clients. Offenders are involuntary clients because once convicted they have to serve their mandatory sentences either in incarceration or the community (Sun, 2012). As a result of their sentence prison inmates are identified depending on their charge and are mandated to take treatment. Most inmates who receive treatment in prison are coerced or involuntary made to do so (Farabee, 1999). Due to being involuntary, an inmate's attitude may be resistant to any type of treatment (Shearer & Ogun, 2002). Resistive behaviors may include distrust for counselors, compliance, low self-disclosure, belief that counseling is useless, and denial that they actually have a problem that needs treatment. A counselor must understand that in order for treatment to be effective, that even though in the beginning inmates are forced to begin sessions, it is the counselors job to engage them in a meaningful rehabilitation process (Sun, 2012).

Vulnerability

The vulnerability of inmates is the primary cause for the difficulty a researcher will face when trying to conduct research in a prison. There are many attributes or characteristics of prison populations that causes prisoners to be vulnerable and subject to abuse and exploitation (Gostin et. al., 2007). Factors that contribute to inmate's vulnerability are: the coercive environment of prisons, poor health care in prisons, substantially low education levels of the inmates, lack of outside social support, lack of proper mental stimulation, an unequal amount of minorities in prison, and inmates coming from disproportionately impoverished backgrounds. Hence, research involving prisoners may include some of the most vulnerable populations: young people, racial minorities, women, persons with mental disabilities, and people with diseases and other great medical needs that may or may not be treated while in prison (Stone, 2004). Because prison inmates are such a vulnerable population, there are many challenges for the ethical conduct of research involving prisoners.

Therefore researchers should be especially cautious when undertaking research involving prisoners as human subjects. To be cautious and aware, researchers must understand how to protect and promote the welfare and well-being of this large population of people because some of the vulnerabilities listed are contingent and can be exasperated by the harsh environment of prisons. As well as present vulnerabilities, the past history of prisoner abuse during research

studies, (i.e. the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, and the Belmont Report), gives evidence for the need to prioritize the welfare of prisoners above everything else. There are two key ethical considerations that are recommended to be used as a guide due to the historical context of prison research: respect for persons and justice. Respect meaning, the protection and encouragement of personal independence. And justice meaning the nondiscriminatory treatment of individuals (Gostin et. al., 2007).

The principles of respect for persons and justice involve the protection of prisoners from exploitation and that safety measures are put in place to reduce aspects of constraint. When that is not possible participation in research should be prohibited. Also prisoners as a group should not endure a disproportionate amount of research burdens without a corresponding amount of benefits (National Research Act, 1974). Ultimately researchers must go through checks and balances to be able to conduct research in a prison; there must be informed voluntary consent, an explanation of risks and benefits, and for research to be ethically permissible by law, research must offer benefits to prisoners that outweigh the risks and both must be fairly distributed among the participants. And a researcher trying to conduct research in prison must always consider what is best for their participants.

Convict Criminology (Autoethnography used in Prison System)

Convict Criminology evolved from the idea that to serve the prison population more efficiently, with the inmates best interests in mind; research must also provide prisoner viewpoints and perspectives because they are a part of the correctional picture (Denzin & Giardina, 2009). The pioneers of convict criminology wanted a more insider view of prisons and how it should be discussed. Ultimately the school of convict criminology began with ex-convicts who produced experience based research on prisons and law enforcement (Newbold et. al. 2014). Convict Criminologists state that to include the views and realities of prisoners and their families in research can help move beyond socially constructed stereotypes. The new school of convict criminology states that their research on prison and prisoners can provide a bridge between prisoners experience and academic research. They can create this bridge because convict criminology based research is informed by their individual and applicable experience within the criminal justice system (Newbold et. al. 2014). Convict Criminology uses autoethnography, a reflexive methodology, which allows researchers to view their subjects and issues through a more reflective lens due to their familiarity with both worlds (Richards & Ross, 2001).

Richards and Ross stated that, prison research is dominated by government funding and conducted by academics or consultants which many of whom are former employees of the law enforcement and correctional settings. They argue that this managerial research persistently does not take into account the harm that is perpetrated by the criminal justice system. To combat this, they propose that researchers and legislators must become more honest and creative on the research that is conducted and the policies they advocate, implement, and evaluate. To achieve this objective, they state that convict criminology is the new and creative approach because it adds a social justice element that was scarcely present in the study of Criminal Justice and Criminology. Convict Criminology dates back to 1938 and has a very long history (Newbold et. al. 2014). One of the most distinguished and known points of view of convict criminology is the convict academic, John Irwin. Throughout his life he devoted himself to using his prison experience to challenge mainstream thinking about prison culture. Many colleagues with the same mindset followed after Irwin, but it was Richard and Ross who coined the term convict criminology. Convict Criminologists are a very eclectic group. The group is made up of members who have served time in one institution, members who have done time in a variety of institutions and programs, and finally members who do not have criminal records but have worked alongside inmates for long periods of times (Ekunwe & Jones, 2011). To stay current and aware of the issues that are faced in prisons, members continue to correspond with inmates and their families as well as going to educational programs (Newbold et. al. 2014).

As noted, some members that are a part of the convict criminologist group, do not have criminal records but have worked in prisons or alongside prisoners. And through their experiences, they have gained personal understandings of the way correctional systems work and how they have changed over time. Yvonne Jewkes (2011) stated that to “deepen our understanding of the people and contexts we study, emotionalism and subjective experience deserve a role in the formulation of knowledge and a more frank acknowledgement of the convergence of subject-object roles does not necessarily threaten the validity of social science” (2011, p.63). Newbold and colleagues (2014) state that one of the weaknesses of outsider research is that it analyzes crime from the viewpoint of the “middle class academic,” and ignores the cultural and environmental contexts in which it criminal behavior often occurs (pg. 4). As researchers we must include and analyze all the cultural, social, and situational aspects of crime

and prison life to paint a accurate picture of the prison system as a whole to add to the missing knowledge and viewpoints from prisons literature of today.

Conclusion

The beginning of this chapter, gave a brief overview of the history of prisons and how they have come to be in present day America. The chapter also discussed what the average offender might look like, and a brief description of prison culture and how it affects an inmate psychologically. Through the investigation of inmate psychology, aggression, and its components was addressed in this chapter and how anger plays a role in violent acts of aggression. The chapter then progressed into discussing traditional treatment options that are implemented in prisons. To then open the discussion about art- making, how it is very prevalent in the life of inmates, and how art therapy as a stand-alone treatment could take advantage of the natural use of art to rehabilitate inmates.

The literature review then moved onto to discuss how art therapy is used as an adjunct treatment with traditional therapies. But because this study had to evolve into an Autoethnography to be able to discuss my personal experiences and become a framework for future art therapists working within the prison system, this chapter discussed the difficulties of implementing treatment in prisons, the difficulty of conducting research within a prison, and closed with the use of autoethnography as a method, specifically convict criminology.

The following chapter will discuss the methodology of the study, how the study will be implemented, and how the data will be gathered to produce the results for the Autoethnography.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of this study is to provide cultural and social context to the literature surrounding the prison system that will be useful when approaching the marginalized populations that make up the prison population. An additional aim is to shed light on the dire need for more research to be conducted to improve the rehabilitation standards in the prison system. In the hopes of providing a template for future art therapists, the literature review discussed the prison setting and population, traditional treatment, art therapy treatment, the difficulty of treatment and research, and why the use of autoethnography can be implemented when working with, doing research, and discussing the prison system. This template will be expanded by the addition of the presentation of my personal narratives and their subsequent analysis. In this chapter, the methodology for studying the guiding research questions that were provided in Chapter One will be outlined. The research design, autoethnography as a method, and data analysis will be included and explained. Internal and external validity, as well as the limitations of the study, will also be discussed.

Autoethnography

Autoethnography can be defined as an approach to research and writing that examines personal experience to understand a larger cultural experience (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et. al, 2011; Holman-Jones, 2005). According to Sparkes (2000), an autoethnography is a “highly personalized accounts that draws upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding” (p. 21). Autoethnography is a qualitative approach that treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act (Adams & Holman-Jones, 2008). Autoethnographers take a variety of approaches, and when writing, the emphasis on the three parts of the term (auto;oneself, ethno;cultural, and graph;analysis) vary from researcher to researcher (Ellis et. al, 2011). Fundamentally, the emphasis on the self, the social, cultural connection, and the application of the research process may change depending on what the researcher feels is most important.

There are various forms and approaches to the autoethnographic writing (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This study will use or take from the personal narrative approach. A personal

narrative or narrative ethnographic approach focuses on the author's academic, research, and personal life (Ellis & Bochner, 2011). Personal narratives offer a way to understand oneself or a specific part of life that overlaps with cultural contexts as well as allowing readers to learn from the author's reflections and understandings about their narratives (Ellis, 2004). This study will use the personal narrative approach as a way to directly link concepts from literature to the narrated personal experience (analytical autoethnography) (Ellis et. al, 2011 & Sparkes, 1996).

Analytic autoethnography requires examination, but other forms of personal narrative such as evocative autoethnography focuses more on letting the story work on its own to reveal its truth or theory (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). Analytic auto ethnographer's will write personal stories and then study the content. With evocative auto ethnographer's, the analysis is built into the story; the story becomes its own theory. For the purpose of this study, I will use the analytical approach to answer the guiding research questions. I will do so because the goal of analytic ethnography is to provide an author's perspective and use empirical data to gain insight into broad sociocultural constructs of today's society (Anderson, 2006).

Anderson (2006) stated that "autoethnography provides an opportunity to explore some aspects of our social lives in a deeper and more sustained manner. And the resulting analysis recursively draws upon our personal experiences and perceptions to inform our broader social understandings and upon our broader social understandings to enrich our self-understandings" (p.390).

Research Questions

The guiding research questions for this study are: (1) what are some of the obstacles and difficulties in establishing structured research within the prison population, and (2) what can an art therapist begin to do to produce a change in the prison system and inmates? These questions will further be examined and explored by the sub-question: Why is it that so many people of color enter the prison system? Each research question will be reflected on and discussed through each narrative.

Research Design

As mentioned in Chapter One, I feel strongly that I have come to realize and learn about the covert and overt aggressions that people of color in America are faced with, how many individuals in prison are people of color, and how overlooked the prison population is, was through my education. I've also learned that there is an abundance of works explaining why the

justice system is flawed, but not enough that speaks to a concrete way of improving it; in particular through art therapy. As a result of my realizations occurring during my time as a student, I feel it necessary for my narratives to also be from that time. They will speak to my discovery of the abject need for reform in the justice system. The three autoethnographic narratives presented will be: “Eyes Opened,” “The Camp Life,” and “Red Tape.” Each narrative will present a brief, evocative description and account of a particular event from my life as a student learning about the correctional system. They’ll provide short stories that embody epiphanies that pushed me to begin questioning the justice system and what it means to be a person of color in America. Each narrative will be followed by a reflection that will discuss major themes identified within them that led to my understanding of the prison system and its population. The themes that will then be synthesized alongside relevant literature to answer the guiding research questions.

Data Analysis

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring enough information to answer the research questions of a study and evaluate the outcomes (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Data interpretation/analysis requires a researcher to inspect and discover useful information when conducting research. An autoethnographer’s research focuses on the self and understanding how the self plays a role within a particular culture. Data analysis in an autoethnography requires researchers to delve into their cultural background and the relationship between themselves and others to interpret meaning from their experiences (Anderson, 2006; Creswell, 1989).

Because an autoethnographer’s research focuses on the self, the researcher’s personal memory becomes a primary source of data. I understand that the use of memories as data might be questioned due to objectivity. So in the following section, I will justify the use of memories as just that, data, and outline how I will support my personal memories/narratives with data collected from current literature, research, and established theories that discuss the correctional setting and the social justice issues surrounding it.

Wall, in her article “Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography” (2008) presented her issue with using her memories as the primary source of data when writing her autoethnography about international adoption; she had to justify the use of memories because the objectivity of her study would be questioned. She was able to eloquently argue for the use of memories as data in an autoethnography. She stated that if a researcher had interviewed her

about her experiences recorded and transcribed them, her experiences would be seen as legitimate and used as data. She argues that a transcript done by a researcher and her autoethnographic text would be based on the same set of memories of her experiences.

To support this claim she takes from the ideas of Coffey (1999) and Ottenberg (1990). When discussing the works of these authors she stated that in ethnographic work, the use of memories is significant in the process of ethnography (Wall, 2008). Memories are collected about one's experiences. As stated previously, an autoethnography is the study of one's personal experiences in relation to their culture. To study one's personal experiences data must be pulled from memory; a researcher will rely on their memory to narrate their experiences within their culture.

However, data in ethnography traditionally has been taken from interviews, participant observation field notes, documents, artifact analysis, and research diaries (Mayan, 2001; Morse & Richards, 2002). Autoethnographers have not explicitly depended on memories as data in their work because "hard" data was used to generate interpretations and make claims. Chang (2008) stated that personal memory is a building block of autoethnography and remembering events is a powerful tool but he also stated that broad-based data such as documents and interviews add to the objectivity of the autoethnographic research.

Like Wall, I will use my personal memories as data to answer my guiding research questions. But to support the data from my memory I will use the "hard" data from case studies and research that has been done in the prison system as well as established theories that discuss the social problems of people of color in the prison systems.

Limitations

The problems or limitations of an autoethnography lie with researcher objectivity (validity and reliability) and if the study's findings can be generalized (generalizability) outside of the study. Ellis (2000) stated that for auto ethnographer's, validity means that a work seeks to be reliable or truthful; an autoethnography should evoke in readers a feeling that the experience described is believable and possible. Autoethnographic writing places emphasis on the researcher's first-person account as the primary source of evidence. Because the researcher is the primary source of data, problems of objectivity can arise. To combat problems of objectivity, this Autoethnography will be validated by the use of multiple sources of data used alongside my personal narratives. As described previously, these sources of evidence include case studies,

established theories, and research studies. Also through the use of various writings as support for the data in relations to my personal accounts; in other words, themes in my personal accounts will be related to the literature. As for the subject of generalizability, Ellis and colleagues (2000) stated that in autoethnography the focus of generalizability is determined through how “the autoethnography can illuminate (general) unfamiliar cultural processes” (para. 35).

Ellis (2004) stated that if a reader can obtain the feeling that the stories presented have informed them about unfamiliar people and their lives, it is successful. Also if the author is able to communicate with others about what was presented in a critical way, then the study is validated by the readers and thus, can be generalized. Essentially, generalizability relies on how well the narratives presented were useful to the general public and if the public at large could put the narratives to use in their personal lives (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). It is quite difficult to generalize my personal experiences for my readers and the general public. But when my personal experiences are paired with the current literature that debates our culture today I can discuss parallels in my life that relate to the bodies of work that examines the correctional system. Because of this, my personal experiences can be seen as one of the many stories that exist about correctional settings; solving the issue of generalizability. Also, the autoethnography is based on the need to discuss new ways of research in correctional settings as well as provide a template for future art therapists who plan on conducting research in correctional settings. The narratives that are discussed are relevant to the purpose of the study, making the study itself useful and generalizable.

Summary

In conclusion, the guiding research questions were presented to begin a discussion about the research design of the study and how data would be collected and analyzed from the three narratives that will be presented. The chapter then concluded with a discussion of how the limitations of the study will be prevented. The next chapter will present my personal narratives as well as their reflections to begin to answer the guiding research questions of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY: JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING

Narrative One: “Eyes Opened.”

While in high school a close family member of mine was incarcerated. I didn't realize the ripple effects his incarceration would have on my life until I reached my undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. During high school, I was coming into my own as an African American female and beginning to understand the hurdles that are placed in front of a person of color specifically an African American. There was a delay in my realization of actually “feeling black” because (1) I come from a family that one could say was a middle-class family. We didn't have a lot, but we had what we needed to build a fun loving family life; I never felt like I was without something. And (2) I am a first generation African. For most of my life, I was in a bubble, and I only knew of my family unit, which was African. Growing up in a small city in Pennsylvania, I consciously knew I was different from my Caucasian counterparts, but I had nothing to compare myself to as a “black person.” Because my neighborhood was dominated by Caucasians with a few Hispanics, my friend group was primarily made up of Caucasians, other Africans, and a few Hispanics. I can only count one black friend from my childhood. In junior high and high school I struggled with my identity more because my family had relocated to Florida, I was exposed to a wide variety of ethnicities which finally included African Americans. I struggled with the idea of “was I black enough” or “was I too black” compared to when I hung out with my African American peers to with my Caucasian peers. But when I reached the undergraduate level I knew I was “black.” I felt it.

During my undergraduate education I felt like I became who I am today; unapologetically black. The University was like a small microcosm of society today, and I became more aware of my “Blackness.” In college, I started to embrace this new identity of being black and African. I was coming to understand the similarities of both cultures and how both cultures faced discrimination, negative stereotypes, and marginalization. Looking back at my education and the experiences I had during my undergraduate education I remember the questions I had about being black; feeling black. My childhood and high school experiences “suggested” to me that I was black and different, but my undergraduate experience opened my eyes to the struggles of being black in America.

I was beginning to identify more with being black, embracing that label that was given to me by western society, and educating myself on the history of being black in America. My life had begun to change. My environment changed, and my friend group changed. My work as an undergraduate level printmaker began to change as well. My art usually grappled with questions of being an African and an African-American woman and what that means in this society. During this time of my identity building, my close family member was incarcerated for the second and third time. By this time I have not seen this family member for four years; from the end of my high school education into the years of my undergraduate education. As the interest in my identity grew so did my interest in correctional settings. I realized after discussing my interests of prison and how they functioned with my friends, few of them knew about the correctional system and how it was taking care of its inmates or residents. Most of the knowledge that they had was based on what they had seen in the media. One nugget of knowledge that my African American counterparts did know or agreed upon was that blacks were the face of prisons.

Because I was becoming closer to African Americans during my undergraduate studies, I realized that a lot of my friends also knew family members or friends in prisons as well. This realization shook me to the core because I never thought about prisons until my family member was incarcerated. Due to my social group, I was exposed to a community of people who understood what I was going through. The worry, the fear, the anticipation for release, and feelings of hopelessness because you could only do so much for your family member was omnipresent. My eyes were open to this new culture due to my family member being a part of that setting. Also due to my family member, I found myself calling many people across the United States on behalf of other inmates through my family member to relay messages. At first, I was hesitant, but then I realized it was common for these people to accept phone calls from random strangers to receive messages from their loved ones. Again my eyes were opened. This was a whole culture unbeknownst to me. The prison culture involves many people's lives across the United States. And now I was one of them. Besides being a black female. I was also a black female with a family member in prison.

My two worlds collided. Being black somehow correlated with entering prison. At that point, I began questioning why that was the case. The more I read about prisons, the more I worried about my family member. The more I read about the justice system, the more I worried

about young black men and their families. I can remember like it was yesterday how I felt when my family member was first released from prison from their first offense. I remember getting on my knees crying in my living room and thanking God that he was out safely. I also remember when he was incarcerated for the second and third time questioning why does this keep happening, why does he always hang out with gang members who he *thinks* are his family, why won't he come back home (during my family members incarcerations he was living in Texas).

One memory that stands out to me during my undergraduate education was when I took an African American studies class because I realized African American history wouldn't be taught to me unless I sought it out. There was one day specifically in the class where the topic of discussion for the lecture was about how African Americans were portrayed in the past and how the effects of past representations have trickled down into present day media and how these images affect our thought processes today. During the lecture, I learned that African Americans were portrayed as fools, menaces to society, as entertainment, and laborers in the past. And in the present day, African Americans are usually seen as football players, basketball players, musicians, and people who are incarcerated. One would rarely see an African American represented as a doctor, lawyer, teacher, or an engineer. Even in movies, African American roles are limited, and there are a few African Americans who have made a name for themselves in that industry. I remember that during the lecture, I began to think about my family member and how the stereotype of being a large muscular black man covered in tattoos must have affected him and the decisions about his case made by prosecutors, defense lawyers, and judges. I thought about what I knew about my family member; that they were the center of attention, the class clown, the star athlete in both basketball and football, the talented artist, and the honor-roll student who met the wrong crowd, a crowd he called family and chased after the wrong things.

After class, I discussed with my professor how she felt about being a black woman and how she dealt with those negative stereotypes. I remember she looked at me straight in the eyes and said: "Sia, you are a double whammy." I looked at her in confusion and asked her to clarify what she meant by that statement. She told me that "because you are black and you are a woman, you're going to have to work 15 times, if not 20 times harder than the next person." At that moment it dawned on me why my parents always pushed for my education. Why my parents chose to send me to a private school even though my sibling and I were two of the seven black children attending is still a mystery to me. Why my dad would always tell me that I should take

pride in being a woman and love the culture of African woman that I have come from is fortuitous. My parents already understood the hurdles I was going to face and were preparing my siblings and I for these obstacles and were preparing my siblings and I to that fact we *could* be the “token” black person in a setting. Our parents gave us the ability to communicate and make friends outside our ethnicity despite limitations put on us and to not see people only by the color of their skin; they also provided us with the understanding that other people may see us that way and to always dream of bigger and better things because no one had the right to tell us otherwise. My professor’s words struck me in such a significant way that till this day I remember her and her advice...that to challenge the negative stereotypes I would have to embrace who I am and work hard for what I deserve.

Not to prove anything to anyone, but to live as an example of what it means to black is my challenge. To show that regardless of what society tells me I am and perceives me to be, I'm not a stereotype. I am not a statistic. I will not steal or do drugs. I will not be a part of criminal activity. I am not scary. And I am not the “angry black girl.” But again I am all those things. Because as a human being if I made a choice to dress a certain way, involve myself in criminal activity, express anger, was not because I am black but because I am a human who makes life decisions. The fact that I will later have to tell my children to work 15 times as hard just because of their skin color bothered me. The fact that I need to “be careful” of how I act around certain people, so they are not uncomfortable, bothered me. The fact that my family member did not rape, assault, or murder anyone, and they have a sentence of 25 years, bothered me.

My experiences and education during my undergraduate education opened my eyes and shifted my way of thinking to the point that I became so passionate about the social justice issues that surround blacks in America, that I could not just be a fine arts printmaking graduate whose art discussed those issues. I had to become a person who got their hands dirty and helped bring about change. These new passions and interests about being black in America and the correctional system led me to art therapy. I have always known that I loved art and art- making. And I always knew that I had wanted to help people. But I now knew the population that I wanted to help. Art therapy was going to become my way of reaching a marginalized population.

Narrative One Reflection

During this time in my education, I began seeing the correlation between blacks and imprisonment. I was dealing with the frustration of the question of why is this happening to people of color. To answer my question as to why people of color specifically African Americans, are so disproportionately represented in the prison system in this reflection, I will discuss the systemic racism theory.

But before discussing systemic racism, one needs to understand the basic definitions of key terms such as race, ethnicity, prejudice and stereotyping, as well as discrimination. According to Feagin (1978), race can suggest a range of different meanings. It can emphasize kinship and links to one's generation as well as categorize human beings by their physical aspects that were passed on through descent; the term race heavily relies on facial features and skin color. Feagin (1978) stated that racial groups are not “generated naturally as a part of nature but constructed by social groups where people inside and outside the group have decided to single out who is superior or inferior on the basis of real or alleged physical characteristics” (p. 7). Prejudice and stereotyping deals with ethnocentrism; a view that one's group is in the center of everything and all other groups are compared to the center group. This comparison causes negative views of outside groups which form stereotypes and prejudice. Prejudice is disliking someone else or holding negative stereotypes of others without a sufficient reason; quickly generalizing a group as a whole based on negative feelings and attitudes (Feagin, 2013). According to Feagin (2013), discrimination can be seen in two ways; gain motivated discrimination and prejudice motivated discrimination. Gain motivated discrimination is caused by the prejudice desire to protect one's privileges while prejudice motivated discrimination is when one is being discriminated against due to another's prejudices (Feagin, 2013). Through racial discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping the theory for systemic racism is possible.

Systemic Racism and the Mass Imprisonment of People of Color. The American dream is so that anyone living in America could have equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative. But America was founded by European Americans who designed the United States to create wealth, privileges and status for themselves (Feagin, 2013). Modern world commerce, modern imperialism, the modern factory system, and modern labor, began with the African slave trade. Slavery was also a central part of the foundation of Atlantic capitalism and during the industrial revolution great inventions came

about through slave linked agricultural or manufacturing industries. The founders of the United States stole land from the indigenous people by various means including violence and used the labor of Africans and other non-European Americans to build the U.S to what it is today. The U.S is the only western country that was explicitly founded on racial oppression (Feagin, 2013). For 350 years of the United States history, slavery or legal segregation was in place. The U.S, as of 2016, is 409 years old, making 85% of U.S history dominated by legal discrimination and oppression. The American dream was made to include equal rights of men but excluded Non-European Americans. Blacks were singled out by their color and appearance, and discrimination was rationalized; oppression of non-Europeans is part of a deep social structure (Feagin, 2013).

As stated earlier racism can be seen as a social construct and a system of oppression and prejudice. Critical race and systemic racism theorists (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Brewer and Heitzeg 2008; Feagin 2013; Neubeck and Cazenave 2001; Winant 2001) believe that racism should not only be seen as personal prejudices toward people with different physical traits but as a long-established, persistent, flexible, and a resilient social system based on the concept of race. As well as a social system that continues to produce power and privilege for those who constructed the system: European Americans. Racism no longer needs to be coerced but is deeply embedded in our society's foundation, social beliefs, and culture (Ostertag & Armaline, 2011).

According to the systemic racism theory this Eurocentric and oppressive foundation that the U.S was founded on has left traces culturally and has actively shaped major U.S institutions and their structures (Feagin, 2013). The foundation of oppression has involved discrimination towards people of color in many institutional areas such as education, politics, housing, healthcare, policing, and public accommodations. People of color still face discrimination in all these areas today including their place in the economy (Feagin, 2013). The bottom line is that today most intuitions, the majority of public spaces, and places are controlled by Caucasians who have indirectly benefited and receive privilege from this Eurocentric foundation. Causing these areas to be Caucasian institutions, places, and spaces that African Americans and people of color have to navigate in (Feagin, 2011). More specifically the prevalence of systemic racism can be seen in the U.S. criminal justice system. As stated numerously in this paper, the systematic incarceration of populations of color, particularly African Americans, is overwhelming.

Mass imprisonment being disproportionately applied to African Americans and people of color has damaging effects on these individuals and their communities. The high rates of

incarceration that are concentrated in poor, largely, African American communities destabilizes “social networks, undermines informal social control, destabilizes families and local economies, and ultimately leads to more crime” (Ostertag & Armaline, 2011, p.278). It does this by removing adults who would have cared for youth; work and provide necessary finances for food, rent, and utilities; and contribute to their community. Once these resources are removed, social networks and the support they would provide are broken down, and communities become even more disorganized and isolated (Ostertag & Armaline, 2011) The disorganization and isolation of communities is a clear form of the institutional manifestations of systemic racism.

There was my answer: history and laws placed people of color where they are today. This is why I felt so bothered. Even though slavery had ended, I still felt its effects. Yes, an African American man is our 44th president, who is of mixed descent I might add. Yes, there are more educated black people than there were during times of slavery and the civil rights movement. And yes, I am reaping the benefits of improved race relations from the past; I have friends from all ethnicities, I can receive an education, and I have dreams and goals that I can aspire to. But we can't deny the facts. African-Americans and other people of color are unfairly sentenced due to the laws in place. People of color are victims of police brutality (i.e. the black lives matter movement). Even though it is the year 2016, people of color still struggle to receive their basic needs such as clean water evidenced by the cases of Flint, Michigan and Sandbrach, Texas to name a few. As a group, African Americans are doing no better than they were during the civil rights movements. Nearly one-fourth of African-Americans live below the poverty line today, approximately the same as in 1968 (Alexander, 2010). And unemployment rates in black communities are similar to those in the Third World countries. (Alexander, 2010). We cannot put on rose colored glasses and assume everything is okay. Finally, I felt like my question had been answered. I was going up against a societal problem: a foundation of U.S, history. Now that I knew what I had to jump over I was ready to take on the challenge.

Narrative Two: “The Camp Life”

I finally made it to my second year as an art therapy student. Even though I had two previous practicum placements under my belt and I specifically asked to take on the challenge of working with juvenile delinquents, I found myself feeling feelings of terror laced underneath my excitement. I remember telling myself “this is what you wanted. Why are you so nervous? *This is what you wanted.* This is the population that you wanted to gain experience in. This is the

population that you want to make a change in". Even as these thoughts passed through my mind I was still terrified. Swallowing my terror, I pushed on and took my first steps onto the camp grounds. My first memory of the facility is one of stares, lots of them. The young men of the facility eyes followed my every move and sized me up every chance they got. I was the new kid on the block, and they were waiting to see what I was about.

My first experience with some of the campers was completing *name embellishments*; a directive that asks one to write their name and decorate it by adding interesting facts about themselves. The name embellishments directive was my way of trying to get to know the campers and a way for them to get to know me and what my role would be at the camp. I wanted to get to know these children before I read their files. I have read countless studies and articles on who juvenile delinquents were and what a challenging population they were to work with. But I did not want to rely too much on what I had read. I wanted to see if they could define themselves and help me to see them for who they were. My first group of campers that I was introduced to consisted of eight campers who were all African-American children except one Hispanic child and one child of mixed descent. I introduced myself, told them who I was, what I do, and what they would be doing with me that day. During the session, I felt like I was putting on a performance and I was having an out of body experience. I felt this way because their mental health counselor, my supervisor who was also an art therapist (the first time I had an art therapist as a supervisor), who *usually* ran the group with the campers was with me in the room. And their direct care staff (one very largely built intimidating man) who worked with the campers daily as a disciplinary figure was in the room as well.

Even though many thoughts were flying through my head, I continued to lead the group by showing an example of my own name embellishment that I had done so the group could have an idea of what I was asking for. I only had one rule: no gang or location imagery was allowed. The facility did not allow the campers to depict or discuss these things unless they were with their mental health counselors and the topic was brought up. After I presented the directive, the campers seemed to be a bit reluctant but they all complied, again thoughts were racing through my head that this was probably because my supervisor and the direct care staff was with me; people who they were familiar with. The group completed the task and couldn't explain or talk about their name embellishments as a group in a productive and ordered manner so I had to go around individually to each camper so they could explain it to me.

They all presented to me a variety of things mostly gang-related images as well as depictions of family members and friends, alive or deceased, which was indicated with an R.I.P next to the name. I was also presented with images that expressed that they were close to someone in prison or a correctional facility. This was communicated by writing “free” next to a person’s name. During the session most were guarded and resistive, and they did everything I told them not to do (e.g. depicting gang related images) which is understandable since it was my first session with the group. After the session my supervisor and I discussed what happened in the group and I was given some advice and encouraging words. After I had told my supervisor how I felt I did, which I felt horrible, I was given three pieces of advice. Firstly, I was told, I need to learn how to bring the group back together at the end of a session so they can process things as a group and understand why they did an activity together. Secondly, I was told that “it always feels like you are putting on a show for staff because, one, none of them are trained in mental health, and two none really know what art therapy is.” I was advised to remember that I will probably be the first example of what an art therapist is to my clients and the staff. And just as I am trying to make a relationship with the campers I should try to make relationships with the staff because they could help me later down the road when disciplinary action is needed or when any other situation arises where I would require their help.

And thirdly, the main piece of advice I was given was to have more confidence in myself. I was told that, “just because the session didn’t go as you planned, doesn’t mean you had a horrible session.” My supervisor said that “the boys are testing you and seeing what boundaries they could push with you and what they can and cannot get away with.” With my supervisor’s advice in mind, I realized that the young men in my group were trying to understand me as a person just as I was doing the same to them. Their stares, reluctance, body language, no regard for my rules, and short comments, were their way of communicating to me. They weren’t verbally talking to me, but they were indirectly telling me who they were. When I had discussed the session with my supervisor, I realized I had picked up a lot more about each camper’s personality than I had realized. After my first day and the two or three days that followed while at the camp, I met and began to build rapport with the many campers at the facility. And in total, I met 35 young men, most of whom were men of color. And just like my first group, many revealed through their art that they were affiliated with a gang, have lost a loved one, or have loved ones in prison. After I had built rapport, I began to look through the files of the campers,

so I could formulate a treatment plan to organize a course of action that I would take over the course of my time at the camp. The first files I read were of each member who was in attendance during my first group. When looking through each file, I felt troubled.

As I read through each file and was compiling my notes, I began to see patterns. Each child had been involved with Department of Children and Families. Each child came from broken homes, either with a single parent, split parents or living with another relative. Each child or most of the children had family members that had been involved with the legal system. Each child, if not living in poverty, we're living right at middle-class standards. Each child had been exposed to substance use, and some have used substances. Also, each child had been diagnosed with either Conduct Disorder, Childhood Onset; a Mood Disorder; or ADHD. Their files and the stories of who they were before coming to the facility kept on matching up. They all came from unstable homes and living environments and had absent parents or guardians. Due to their situations, the members turned to negative peer groups. They all had various charges but violating probation for their charges was the main reason for being at the camp; they lacked a parental figure to get them to their probation officer or keep them from violating their probation.

As I flipped through the many pages of information, I came to the realization of, “no wonder.” “No wonder they acted the way they did during group. No wonder this child is here at this camp. No wonder I'm working with this child. And no wonder this is what I want to do.” While going over the client folders, I explained my thoughts on the camper's situations to my supervisor. My supervisor told me, “Sia these children and these situations or what you are going to see here for the most part.” I was taken aback because I was finally hearing the stories of the juvenile delinquents and prison inmates I have read so much about. I had always made the correlation between people of color and correctional facilities, but I never thought about what real life circumstances led them to these facilities. White or person of color alike, they came from poverty, neglect, and most gang affiliated because they had found families amongst their gang; I started to remember my family member again.

Narrative Two Reflection

At this moment in my life and education, I was finally making the connection that, yes, these young men face a larger societal issue *but* they also all have stories. I started to notice first hand that besides the link between people of color and the justice system, there was a

relationship between people of color, gang affiliations, and poverty. After leaving my undergraduate studies and entering into my graduate studies, my hopes and aspirations were to work on the “inside” and change the “system.” I wanted to help these men and young adults cope with their new harsh environment and teach them skills to take with them once they left a correctional facility. But I never stopped to think about reaching these young men *before* they even entered a correctional facility. I never deeply thought about what was their life like before they entered a correctional facility. Or what life moments led them to a correctional facility.

As a therapist, I was taught from day one that to gain a better understanding of your clients you should understand their background and social history. In my first two practica, the need for family or social background information helped but wasn't that applicable. My first internship site was working with people with mild to severe intellectual disabilities and developmental delays. My goals in my first internship consisted of finding things my clients were interested in so I could help them express themselves through artistic means, build their environmental awareness, making them feel empowered and accomplished when finishing tasks, and teaching them appropriate ways of communicating. My second practicum was at a short-term rehabilitation center usually for the elderly where the turn-over was so quick that my goals were molded around the goals the facility had for each client.

Some goals that I had for my clients were to help increase mobility, increase standing tolerance, and increase pain tolerance. I never had to fully put the use of family and social background history into practice until going to intern at the camp. I now had to put theory into practice and think of ways to reach the young men at the camp who previously lacked basic resources and were surrounded by opportunities to make money fast and find family in the wrong places (i.e. gang affiliations). To relate my personal experiences to prison literature, in this reflection I will discuss and define gangs. Because after reflecting on my camp experiences I realize that even though gangs are seen as violent and threats to society, to my clients, “gangs” were a large group of people they called family; people they felt they could identify with. Gangs were a part of their identity and telling them not to depict them in their art was not going to stop them. Secondly, when reflecting on this part in my education the issue of poverty or lack of resources and guidance came up. To discuss the issue of poverty and lack of resources amongst people of color, I will discuss the social disorganization theory. Lastly, I will address the issue of

treatment, putting theory into practice, to include the social and environmental factors that affect these young men.

Gangs. A street gang can be defined as:

an organized social system that is both quasi-private (not fully open to the public) and quasi-secretive (much of the information concerning its business remains confined with the group) and one whose size and goals have necessitated that social interaction be governed by a leadership structure that has defined roles...that plans and provides not only for the social and economic services of its members, but also for its own maintenance as an organization; that pursues such goals irrespective of whether the action is legal or not; and that lacks a bureaucracy (i.e., an administrative staff that is hierarchically organized and separate from leadership). (Jankowski, 1991 p. 5)

This definition encompasses the overall structure of the gang system and also shows how membership into a gang can be appealing, because there is structure and a place to belong within the system. To add to the definition of gangs, gangs emerge from poor and socially disorganized neighborhoods and they promote delinquency. Some of the many risks associated with gang membership includes exposure to violent crime, and possible incarceration. But despite these risk factors there are still so many young men willing to join them. There are several factors that have been identified to increase the likelihood that a young man will join a gang. These factors include: (1) the presence of gangs in the neighborhood, (2) having gang members in the family already, (3) histories of sexual or physical abuse, (4) growing up in poverty, (5) having access to weapons and drugs, (6) a lack of success in other areas of life, such as school, and (7) the lack of skills and drive to find and compete with others for a job when enticed by the fast money that could be made in a gang (Jankowski, 1991). Young adults also join gangs because they both act as a substitute family, as well as provide a sense of belonging, power, control and prestige; all things that Jankowski (1991) stated are commonly identified as being absent in childhood among gang initiates.

When one thinks of gangs and their members one might initially think, black or person of color, misfits, menaces to society, or social safety problems. The life of a gang member and the gang culture is sensationalized. It is either being put down by news outlets or idolized by youth. That it is forgotten that these “gang members” we see in movies, music videos, and in the news are today’s youth. Youth and individuals that are not given the same opportunities to succeed.

These young men of color that are in gangs are an underserved overlooked population and the only option given to them is to enter the justice system. We need to look past the sensationalized gang culture and remember the forgotten “prison-prone population” and look at the culture of poverty and oppression that these individuals are a product of instead of entering them into a cycle of recidivism.

To give some context to the lives of gang members, I will briefly discuss the book *The Minds of Marginalized Black Men*. The book is a small ethnographic study that takes a glimpse into three young black men’s lives living in Westside Chicago, Illinois; also known as “Chiraq” another word to describe the area’s violent history and crime rates by Chicago natives and outsiders. Chicago has an extensive history of gang and gang violence dating back to the 1960’s, with some of the highest rates of gang activity in the United States (Spergel, 1984). Also in Illinois, the prison population has grown by more than 60 percent since 1990 (Street, 2001). The growth has been driven by the increased admissions of African American men, where more than 44,000 prisoners are African-American. Illinois has 115,746 more persons enrolled in a four-year university than in prisons; yet there are 10,000 more blacks in prison than enrolled in college. According to Street (2001), 70 percent of men between ages 18 and 45 in the impoverished neighborhoods of Chicago's West Side are ex-offenders.

The Minds of Marginalized Black Men explained to readers that we need to understand that these young men’s worldviews and beliefs are shaped by the environment where they come from; urban areas stricken with poverty and social disorganization (Young, 2006). Rather than overly discussing the actions and behaviors of these men, the book delved into the minds and thoughts. Young (2006) stated, that “one's behavior is not a transparent reflection of one's underlying thoughts” (p.10). For example, if someone decided not to continue their high school education doesn’t mean that they do not understand how and why a college education would be beneficial to get ahead in life and follow their dreams.

Thus, the primary goal of the book was to delve into these young men's worldviews on issues such as socioeconomic mobility, opportunity, and future life chances (Young, 2006). The book explored how these young men's capacity to make sense of these issues especially while in their difficult socioeconomic situation living in Chicago. The book uncovered that each of the young men interviewed developed very different understandings about these issues, their obstacles, and how to manage them.

For example one young man, Larry had goals and aims for the future related to his want to leave behind rather than what he hoped for the future. He was trying to distance himself from what he considered bad influences rather than planning for a better tomorrow. Another young man, Devin, understood clearly what he needed to do to have a chance at a better life; get away from the gang life. As a gang member, he understood that his activities stunted his options to for personal growth and job opportunities and also that he could not overcome the obstacles placed before him in Chicago unless he moved away to start over. Finally, the last young man interviewed, Casey, did not know what his future employment goals and dreams for the future were but he stated he understood what it means to be a black man in the U.S with little chances for success; through hustling and dealing, he felt he had enough access to people and opportunities to aid him in defining where he stood in the world and what he believed he had to do to succeed. (Young, 2006)

The book didn't focus on what these men did when they had a firearm or when they had drugs in their possession, nor any other things that are usually associated with the gang culture. Rather, the book brought to light what these men had to say about where they believed their place was in American society. Young (2006) stated that, the book "explores what men like Larry, Casey, and Devin understand the 'good life' to be and whether they believe that such a life is within their reach" (p.14). The case study did not dwell on how these young men handled the situations and different aspects of their lives. Instead, it explored how they thought about the world they live in and were a part of. The book made a stand that the behavior of these men emerges from the accumulation of knowledge they have acquired about how the world works, and how they have come to work within it.

I agree with the stance of Young that these young men's cultural beliefs, worldviews, and values, are shaped by their environment and how they think and feel they can operate within it. Today the socially accepted solution is to incarcerate these young men and increase police-based surveillance in urban neighborhoods instead of evaluating the environments that they live. Today's society needs to stop, reflect, and question why is it that poverty, gang relation, and being a person of color have such a complicated relationship. Today's society must seek to understand these young men as humans and treat their presenting issues in a holistic and humanistic way instead of giving them the only option of incarceration; be aware that their behaviors and actions do not dictate everything about who they are.

Social disorganization theory. Social disorganization theory is a macro social community level explanation that answers the question, what is it about community structures and cultures that produce differential rates in crime (Sampson & Wilson, 1995; Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003)? What is the relationship between gangs, poverty, and people of color? The theory discusses the effects of different types of neighborhoods and how they can create conditions favorable or unfavorable to crime and delinquency (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003). The social disorganization theory is also a systemic model where the local community is viewed as a complex system of friendship and familial networks and ties as well as ongoing socialization (Sampson & Wilson, 1995). The model takes a look at a community's inability to realize common goals and solve chronic problems. According to the theory, poverty, job scarcity, residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity, and weak social networks causes a lack of community social control that would otherwise help the control of public behaviors; hence an increase in the likelihood of crime (Sampson & Wilson, 1995).

The theory was developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay in Chicago, Illinois (1969;1942). During the time the theory was developed, it was argued that there were positive correlations between race/ethnicity and delinquency rates (Shaw & McKay, 1969). When studying the relationship between race/ethnicity and crime, Shaw, and McKay (1969), discovered that high delinquency rates persisted in certain Chicago neighborhoods for extended periods of time despite changes in the racial and ethnic composition of these communities. Leading them to hypothesize that the correlation between ethnicity and crime may be due to substantial differences in community environments and their frameworks. In their study, they compared African American and Caucasian neighborhoods that were considered to be low income (Shaw & McKay, 1969). The results of their study demonstrated that, yes there are higher rates of crime in African American neighborhoods, but there are not higher rates in comparable Caucasian areas because it is impossible to reproduce in white communities the circumstances which black kids live. They stated that, even if it were possible to replicate the same low economic status and the shortcomings of institutions in white communities, it still would not be feasible to reproduce the effects of segregation and the barriers to upward mobility (Shaw & McKay, 1969). The results led them to conclude that a neighborhood's ecological conditions shape crime rates rather than the characteristics of individual residents; ethnicity didn't directly affect delinquency, but the type of area did. They concluded that low economic

status, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility led to the disruption of community social organization which accounted for variations in crime and delinquency rates (Shaw & McKay, 1969).

Evidence of the social disorganization theory is explained by concentration effect, a term coined by W. J. Wilson. Concentration effect is that of living in a neighborhood that are overwhelmingly impoverished (Wilson, 1987). The central theme of concentration effect, is that the extreme level of disadvantage in some neighborhoods creates a distinctly different social-structural setting. In particular, extremely disadvantaged areas are socially isolated from mainstream society. And because of this, its residents have less access to jobs, quality education, and less exposure to traditional role models (Wilson, 1987). Also, the term explains that extremely disadvantaged neighborhoods have fewer people working, so the effect of irregular and deprived economic conditions are deeply felt. This in turn, hinders the ability of communities to sustain basic institutional structures and various sources of social control. And when all these factors are in play in the social environment unusually high levels of crime is the result (Wilson, 1987).

A study done by Krivo and Peterson (1996) using Wilson's argument as its base, compared low socioeconomic neighborhoods to see if his argument was indeed correct. Consistent with Wilson, they argued that due to the history of deliberate policy decisions to concentrate minorities and the poor into public housing has led to massive segregated housing projects that have become ghettos for minorities and the disadvantaged--- relating back to the systemic racism theory that was discussed earlier (Krivo and Peterson, 1996). Krivo and Peterson (1996) believed that extreme neighborhood poverty and disadvantage are associated with unusually high levels of crime because the conditions that encourage criminal behavior are highly present. They explained that means of social control that typically serves to discourage crime are lacking. And within the most disadvantaged neighborhoods residents are socialized to engage in criminal activity through modeling because of commonly witnessing crimes (Krivo & Peterson, 1996). As a result, crime is a regular part of these people's lives. They now have the need to adapt to their environment that encourages further crime and violence because they need to appear ready to use violence to defend their lives and property. Making people who rely upon violence for defensive purposes to increase (Krivo & Peterson, 1996). Krivo and Peterson argued that the role modeling and adaptation processes just described may be evident in the most

disadvantaged communities because of widespread joblessness and erratic employment. These conditions mean that many who reside in these neighborhoods are idle for large parts of the day. These inactive individuals may be more involved in settings where this type of role modeling and defensive outlook are prevalent, which may be very conducive to criminal activity (Kribo & Peterson, 1996); relating back to gang involvement that was discussed previously.

Through their findings, they were able to conclude that Wilson's concentration effect was correct in arguing that extreme disadvantage provides a distinctly different structural context for crime. However, they concluded that this framework generates unusually high levels of violent crime only. And that the violent crime-disadvantage relationship differs depending upon the aspect of social deprivation/ community structures. But still, overall, their findings indicated that race, social disadvantage, as well community structure have a complicated relationship that are definitely factors that play a role in the high crime rates in African American neighborhoods. (Kribo & Peterson, 1996). Thus supporting the social disorganization theory as well as supporting systemic racism which was discussed in narrative reflection one.

Things have now come together in full circle. Because there is a deeply rooted societal issue called systemic racism, social disorganization exists. Even though in the U.S race relations has progressed, there are still barriers in place that people of color face. Because some people of color lack their basic needs, some chose to fulfill their needs in the only option they feel open to them. They either become involved in criminal activities or become affiliated with gangs that provide stability, monetary gain, and a sense of family. The campers that I was so fortunate to work with can be seen as products of the theories, systemic racism, and social disorganization, and how today people of color still feel the ripple effects of the history the U.S. was founded on.

Understanding the population: Implementing traditional treatment. When applying counseling in treatment for marginalized individuals, it can be argued that social justice issues cannot be addressed adequately in individual and family counseling or psychotherapy alone. Counseling needs to be addressed at the community level, especially when working with ethnic minority groups (Sue et al. 1998; Trimble & Thurman 2002; Santiago-Rivera et al., 2005). The therapeutic interventions put in place with marginalized populations need to demonstrate social and systemic change and address issues such as disability, poverty, and social justice issues such as oppression and discrimination (Israel, 2006). As was stated earlier, these young men are products of their environment. According to Santiago-Rivera and colleagues (2005), to be a

multiculturally competent counselor one must (1) understand the bottom line of systemic racism. (2) Conceptualize clients presenting problems in a larger sociopolitical context and (3) broadens one's knowledge of the scope of disciplines that your client will interact with by partnering with experts in fields such as welfare, public health, and the law to facilitate effective interventions (2005). According to Morrow and colleagues, a counselor must also take into account a client's cultural systems and structures, their cultural values, their understanding of their gender roles, and trauma if evident (2006).

So a therapist or counselor must take on these considerations to be able to provide and adapt to many different roles for their clients such as crisis counselor, educator, consultant, advocate, and mediator. Goals that align with these roles can be (1) providing opportunities for clients to feel like they can make decisions over of their lives by providing opportunities for action and activism as well opportunities to guide how they want their counseling experience to be. (2) Provide group work that promotes support and friendships. (3) Provide opportunities for insights on their strengths and limitations. And (4) provide education about negative stereotypes and their rights as humans; involving them in political discussions as well as discussions of how they can succeed despite limitations (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2005; Cosgrove, 2006).

Overall a therapist's goals must be able to put in place interventions that empower clients to develop positive support systems and promote themselves and their interventions as a positive way to address populations at risk such as gang members to affect public policies. As a therapist, you must realize that it is not the individual you are treating but an individual who was a part of a large community.

Implementing art therapy treatment. As described earlier, when working with marginalized groups counseling can take on a social activist stance and one can understand the broader community influences on their clients (i.e. social disorganization theory). But according to Hocoy (2005), art therapy treatment as a whole is still significantly separated from interventions of social justice. Hocoy stated that a conceptual model that integrates social action and art therapy does not exist, but there *is* a link between social action and art therapy; the art. When looking through some of the recent literature on the use of art for social justice, one can find that the arts for social justice, encompasses a broad range of visual and performing arts. The art created aimed to raise critical consciousness, build community, and motivate individuals to promote social change (Bell, & Desai, 2011; Hanley, 2011; Roberts, 2011).

Art has many purposes such as recording history, shaping culture by being used as religious and political propaganda, cultivating imagination, comments on contemporary culture, and becomes a dialogue between artist and viewer (McDonnell, 2009). And because of its abilities, art can generate awareness and engage community members to take action on a social issue (Hanley, 2011). The processes of creating and engaging with social justice art equips people with the tools to understand and confront social injustices through social justice education, community building, and social activism (Roberts, 2011). Examples of visual and performing social justice art include drawing, painting, sculpture, murals, graffiti, film, theater, music, dance, and spoken word (Bell, & Desai, 2011; Hanley, 2011; Roberts, 2011).

To apply the tackling of social justice issues and the use of social justice art in art therapy, Hocoy (2005) provided a philosophical and basic theory for integrating the two. Hocoy's framework is a transpersonal frame of thinking for how the individual and society may be interrelated; that there is a relationship between an individual's suffering and societal structures. He proposed that art therapists should think in this way to be able to integrate social activism and art therapy. His framework and model presented calls for new ideas in art therapy, ones that combine "individual and collective transformation through seeing, healing, and activism" (p.14).

Hocoy claimed that art therapists and their clients replicate the dynamics of society in the microcosm of the therapeutic relationship. An art therapist must recognize and address dynamics that play out in our society and be careful not to transmit or reinforce them during our sessions, given the power they possess in the professional and therapeutic relationship. He explained that art therapists must understand that there is no possibility for social justice until art therapists come to terms with their ideas of stereotypes and prejudices. By doing so, they will be able to form a socially conscientious art therapy practice that is consistent with the values, beliefs, and healing traditions of the community's culture. For example, understanding our privilege in comparison to our client and being aware that our values may be different due to our difference in opportunities and resources can help build a constructive therapeutic alliance.

Hocoy also stated that for art therapy to have the power of individual and societal change, art therapists must understand the invisible structures and biases it inherits. He made an interesting claim that as part of art therapy history, art therapists were not trained to be social and cultural analysts or critics, but are trained to use the art therapy process to help people cope and

adapt to unjust systems. Essentially, instead of critically thinking about and directly confronting the system to create change art therapists worked with and within the system to *hopefully* create change. He argued that for an art therapist to be a real social activist, they must choose, to give priority to those parts of humanity that are marginalized, give expression to the voiceless, remember the dispossessed, challenge destructive ideologies and myths, minimize power differentials, and seek wholeness in fragmented relationships. The activist-therapist understands that political neutrality and therapeutic passivity serve only the omnipresent forces of oppression and injustice.” (p. 12)

In essence, utilizing social justice art that involves creating art as a form of personal transformation and political expression.

Using Hocoy’s framework and the social justice counseling considerations discussed previously, this paper will argue that to create a therapeutic alliance and for treatment to be effective, the art therapist (1) must be acutely aware of the societal systems in which they and their clients are a both a part of. (2) Be conscientious of the client's culture, values, and belief structures (e.g. individual’s culture, prison culture). (3) Give the client the opportunity to express themselves. (4) Involve the client in their greater community using social justice art (e.g. being part of a large group project like painting murals on the facility, having a blog to promote inmates artwork). And (5) help the client make positive peer connections before and after their release. To put theory into practice, one must strive to be a social activist as well as an art therapist.

Narrative Three: “Red Tape”

From the moment I was accepted into my graduate study program, I knew I wanted to do a thesis. During my interview process, I met a few of the current graduate students because there was a welcoming dinner for the interviewees. During the dinner, we were able to ask questions about the program that we were hesitant to ask or forgot to ask during our interview. At one point during the welcoming dinner, the topic of choosing to do a thesis versus a project came up. There were various things said on the subject, but one graduate’s answer affected my decision. She said “We are *it* for Art Therapy. Art therapy is relatively new, so we *are* the next pioneers in our field. So I chose to do a thesis”. Essentially, what I took away from her comment was that we are still adding to the foundation of our field and I have the ability to lay down at least one brick. At that moment I made my decision to undertake a thesis. Thankfully I was accepted to the

program, and as I was about to transition into my second year, the idea of a thesis became a reality. My thoughts for my thesis were driven by the current beliefs and values that were set during my educational experiences in narrative one and two. Feelings of excitement ran through me. I really wanted to show how art therapy, my field, the field that I have come to love, could help prisoners; the population that I was so passionate about. The beginning of my thesis journey started when I began planning and writing my thesis in May, the last semester of my first year of graduate school. I needed to have my thesis completed by the end of June early July, closer to the end of my second year. Through the months of May and November, I was writing and finalizing my thesis with my committee. By December my thesis was accepted by my committee. And at this time I also made contact with a correctional facility for my study. During this period I also started the IRB (Institutional Review Board) process with my university to be able to use human subjects in my study (i.e. prison inmates).

For the months of December through February, I had been in contact with the correctional facility and was denied entry. I was denied entry because my study required staff time (interviews), I needed to redefine what I meant as aggressive inmates as participants (because they were concerned for my safety and there were security policies put in place at the facility). And I was only asking for one participant which would not be plausible at the facility. So through the month of March, I had stayed in contact with the correctional facility and was waiting for approval. In March I had made the revisions to my study that were required in order to gain approval (e.g. removing the interviews, asking for participants with a history of aggressive tendencies shown through their reason for conviction instead of currently aggressive inmates, and expanding the number of participants to a group sample of 6-8). During this time I was also tabled by the IRB of my university. I was tabled because I needed to add details about who I was being supervised by and how, my methodology, my data analysis and measurements used, corrections to my consent form, and also because I still didn't have evidence of approval from the correctional facility to do my study. Because my time was limited and I was still waiting for approval from the correctional facility and needed to receive evidence of their approval to move forward through the IRB process, I also made contact with two other local county jails. I was denied entry in one because the facility usually doesn't allow research being done in the facility. And the second facility entertained the idea of my study proposal but later stopped replying to my calls or emails.

But thankfully, at the beginning of April, I was finally approved by the correctional facility I had originally been in contact with to begin conducting my study. So all that was left was to pass the IRB process and head straight to work for my study because July, the month to defend my thesis, was approaching fast. Sadly, though, even after I was accepted by the correctional facility I was tabled for the second time and asked to do more revisions for the IRB process. The reason my study was tabled for the second time was related to PREA, which is the Prison Rape Elimination Act, a federal law that protects inmates or any person in a correctional setting against sexual misconduct. Essentially I had to provide language in my study about participants who indicated a history of abuse and aggression also have an increased risk for sexual abusiveness. Therefore I needed to address information such as the participant's right and duty to report such issues. I had to indicate how issues divulged which are related to PREA will be reported and who they will be reported to. I also had to add this language to my consent forms as well to express when confidentiality could be broken. Because I was tabled for the second time, I made contact with the head of my committee for my IRB review to ask what needed to be done to ensure I would not be tabled for the third time. After a few emails and a phone call, it was made apparent that there were many things that needed to be added to my study proposal. The prison population, which was the center of my thesis, was a protected population. According to my committee head, I was going to at least need two more months (IRB meetings happened once a month) to finalize my study and add all the required language that will ensure the protection of the participants in my study.

At this point, I found myself at a loss. When my committee head told me that I would need two more months for revisions, the thought that ran through my head was, "Wait. What?! I would at least need *two months* to be able to get through the IRB process fully. But I only have two months to enter my thesis into the University's system so that I could defend my thesis on time and graduate in August. And I *will* graduate in August. I figuratively and literally cannot afford to take another semester to finish my thesis." I had hit a wall of "red tape." I thought I had cut through the red tape when I was denied and accepted into the correctional facility of my study. I thought I cut through the red tape when I reentered my study to go through the IRB process for the second time. But at that moment in time, I realized that was not the case. It felt like I had run a marathon for the past five months of going back and forth between emails and revisions all for nothing. But I couldn't give up. It was my dream to do a thesis since I entered

my graduate program and time was of the essence. I turned to my thesis committee for advice, and it was suggested to me to think of the possibility of turning my study into an autoethnography. I took that suggestion.

Narrative Three Reflection

During this moment in my education, I was introduced to the difficulties of passing the IRB process. I found it interesting that the population that I have come to know as neglected and overlooked was a “protected” population and there was a “gate master” called the IRB protecting them. As stated earlier in the literature review, many ethical considerations need to be considered because of how vulnerable the prison population is as well as the complexity of the formal structural elements of a correctional facility; placement of prisons, coercion, and the lack of well-trained staff. To relate current literature back to my personal experiences, in this reflection, I will discuss what the IRB board is and the difficulties and process of having an IRB committee due to the vulnerabilities of inmates. I will then discuss and close my reflection with the Department of Health and Human Services’ guidelines for conducting research with inmates as human subjects.

Understanding the system: Getting through the red tape. The IRB is an Institutional Review Board. It is a committee established to review and approve research involving human subjects (Institutional Review Board, 2016). The purpose of the IRB is to maintain that all research conducted with human subjects are in agreement with all federal, institutional, and ethical guidelines. The Institutional Review Board defines a human subject by Federal Regulations (2016). Human subjects are living individuals that an investigator conducting research obtains (1) data through intervention or interaction with the individual and (2) any identifiable private information. Human participants include people who are actively involved in the research process by either being interviewed, filling out surveys, participating in an intervention, etc. The IRB committee reviews all research that involves living individuals to protect participants and protect their human rights; they are advocates for the participants (Institutional Review Board, 2016). When going through the IRB, ones has to be prepared to include the risks to the human subjects, plans of protections against those risks, and potential benefits for the subjects. As well as be prepared to discuss the importance of the study (what knowledge will be gained/why important for society), data and safety monitoring plans, inclusion and exclusion criteria for subjects, and any additional requirements that is needed for a particular vulnerable population.

Prison population as a vulnerable and protected population. Before World War II there were no specific codes of ethics, laws, or regulations that oversaw the conduct of human subject's research (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016). Later due to the sometimes violent and unwarranted abuse and mistreatment of certain populations, the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, the National Research Act, the Belmont Report, and many other policies were put in place as principles for ethical research. These policies included the importance of voluntary consent, informed consent, and fundamental principles such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice (Department of Health & Human Services, 2016). Today current federal regulations provide additional protections and special requirements for research and instruct IRBs to be aware of the unique problems or issues to be wary of during research that involves vulnerable populations. Groups that are considered to be vulnerable are: children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, and economically or educationally disadvantaged persons (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2016). All studies seeking to have human subjects must provide during the IRB the safeguards that will be put in place to protect the rights and welfare of the subjects.

Prisoners specifically are a vulnerable population because due to being under incarceration, their ability to make truly voluntary and make un-coerced decisions about whether or not they would like to participate in research is limited. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) (2009) defines a prisoner as any individual that is involuntarily confined or detained in a penal institution. The definition is an umbrella definition which includes all persons sentenced to facilities under a criminal or civil law. Individuals detained in other facilities that provide alternatives to criminal prosecution or incarceration in a penal institution, and individuals detained that are awaiting to receive their charges, sentencing, or trial (Department of Health and Human Services, 2009).

During the IRB review when a study has inmates as subjects the committee has to review certain guidelines. These guidelines include: (1) procedures for the selection of subjects within the prison are fair to all prisoners and immune from arbitrary intervention by prison authorities or prisoners. (2) The information, intervention and consent forms that are given to the participants should be presented in language which is understandable to the particular population. And (3) guarantee to the inmates that parole boards will not take into account a prisoner's participation in the research in making decisions regarding parole. And each prisoner

is clearly informed in advance that participation in the research will have an effect on his or her parole (§46.305).

Also to protect this population, the only studies that may use prisoners must only involve (1) the study of the possible causes, effects, and processes of incarceration, and criminal behavior, provided that the study presents no risks or inconvenience to the participants. (2) The study of prisons as institutional structures or of prisoners as incarcerated persons provided that the research presents and holds no risks or inconvenience to the participants. (3) Research on the conditions particularly affecting prisoners as a class for example research on social and psychological problems such as substance misuse, and sexual assaults provided that the study may proceed only after experts including experts in penology, medicine, and ethics, are consulted. And (4) research on practices, both innovative and accepted, which have the intent and realistic chance of improving the health or well-being of the participants (§46.306).

When beginning my thesis I had no idea these policies and protections were in place. I had done many things for my IRB review, but I still had many revisions to add to my proposal to meet the requirements of DHHS; because my population for the study had so many restraints and guidelines. I found the fact that the prison populations were not given the proper resources to be rehabilitated to re-enter society but yet they were heavily protected by the government to be ironic. Here I thought that the prison population had no types of protection when in fact there were stipulations and statutes put in place to protect their human rights, at least when it came to research. As a researcher I was held to standards that protect the prison population and their wellbeing, while at the same time, the facilities that house this population was struggling to meet this standard. As stated in my literature review the government spends astronomical amounts to keep prisons operating but in turn resources for mental health and overall wellbeing for the inmates are lacking, fueling the cycle of recidivism. I realize if I want to make any change in the prison system I would need time. Time to think of an original and useful way to help inmates. Time to go through correctional facilities “red tape” and time to go through the IRB reviews “red tape.”

Summary

As I have grown older and especially now that I have come closer to understanding what I want to achieve for myself and what I have a passion for, I have come to realize that my heritage and being a part of black culture has shaped me into the person I am today. There are so many things that I have been confronted with during my clinical practice where I find myself always falling back to the teachings of my African heritage and my culture of being African American. My family, my culture, and my beliefs, have sculpted who I am today, my practice as an art therapist, and how I present myself to others. The three narratives presented are a reflection of my mixed culture that have shaped me into the person I am today. I am African, I am Black, and I am a Woman. My education helped me question these pieces of who I am and understand how they affect my everyday life. Even though these three narratives are short and span over large periods of time in my life, they show my growth as a person and my understanding of being an African American woman, the many thoughts I have about today's society, and my thoughts on how to become a competent art therapist.

During my high school and undergraduate education (Eyes Opened), I was trying to understand what it means to be black in America and working through the many stereotypes that people of color are faced with. As a love for myself and my culture grew, my passion and love for people of color like myself grew. During this time in my education my interest for the correctional population began to take shape because the many correlations I found with my family member's situation and my peers' family and friends. The more I questioned society, the more I began to understand the injustices and covert aggressions people of color face every day. A spark was lit within me and I wanted to become an agent of change. I wanted to become one of the many ripples of change in the way people of color are treated, specifically in correctional settings. I wanted to provide a way out of the cycle of recidivism. And through my time interning at the camp (The Camp Life) I found how I could do that through art therapy. I could use art therapy to create a door; a way out of the cycle. During my internship I came to learn more about what happened to my clients before they entered correctional facilities. And through learning about their history, I came to recognize that there was a relationship between people of color, gang affiliations, and poverty. All the puzzle pieces seemed to be coming together at this time for me. A large number of people of color are in prison and many of these people are involved with gangs or partake in criminal activity because they lack opportunities or come from

impoverished neighborhoods. And many people of color reside in impoverished neighborhoods or lack opportunities because the history of our society was founded on segregation and oppression.

As people of color we will face stereotypes and hurdles to our upward progression to attain our aspirations. I learned that as an art therapist, I had to understand my client's history, culture, and the communities they came from to help them on an individual level. Equipped with this knowledge I wanted to prove to myself and others the effectiveness of art therapy within correctional facilities. But in the process of trying to conduct research, I was caught in "The Red Tape". In the latter part of my graduate education I learned how protected inmates actually are. I learned more deeply of their vulnerabilities and how the IRB protects them. I came face to face with the irony of the IRB process. I who was trying to help a discriminated against population was thwarted from doing so because the IRB process was so extensive. During this time I learned how difficult it is to help someone or create change. Passion could not be my only tool; I needed education. I had to become more educated about the prison system and the vulnerabilities inmates face. As well as understand the safety plans put in place to protect inmates during research.

Because of my journey through my education I am now an art therapist who wants to give what she can, help to the best of her ability, be strong for others who don't have support or are marginalized, and love and see a person for who they are. Today I am passionate about working in correctional facilities and being an art therapist as well as a social activist to change the unfair sentencing laws and treatment of the many men in prison, specifically men of color who are disproportionately represented.

The following chapter will conclude this autoethnography by presenting my findings and what I have learned during the process of writing an autoethnography.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Despite research and rehabilitation efforts in correctional facilities, recidivism of inmates remains a societal issue. Therefore the study's original intent was to introduce art therapy as a new way to aid and add to the rehabilitation of inmates and begin to lay a foundation of change in the way inmates partake in treatment. However, due to unexpected hurdles, my study's purpose changed and a qualitative research method was used, autoethnography.

Autoethnography is a form of narrative writing that engages the reader in the cultural experiences of the writer. The reader is invited to follow the author's train of thought as they analyze and interpret their cultural experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Autoethnography was used to present my personal interactions with the correctional system and how my passion grew for the prison population. I retold stories during my education that greatly impacted my views on the prison system and its population. The supporting data for my personal narratives consisted of peer-reviewed articles and studies in correctional facilities and theories that discuss race and minority living. They added insight and helped answer my guiding research questions.

The intention of sharing my personal stories was to illustrate the complexities of the prison system in the United States, why change and more research is needed, and where an art therapist fits within the complexities and ideas of change. The literature review of Chapter 2, laid the foundation for the personal narratives and focused on the prison, its populations, culture, traditional treatment, art therapy treatment, the difficulties of implementing treatment and conducting research, and convict criminology. This Autoethnography's purpose was to add to the body of literature on prison research and discuss prison populations in a more subjective and holistic way. As well as lay the framework of thinking for a future art therapist wanting to conduct research in a correctional facility.

Making the Connections (Findings)

The three points in my education that were shared in Chapter 4 have significantly shaped my understanding of how to work within the prison system. I began to think of better ways to approach the correctional system and ways to be a better art therapist. Having my "eyes opened," living "the camp life," and struggling with the "red tape," I came to the realization that I needed

to be more educated about the prison population; especially when it comes to putting theory into practice and when trying to conduct research. I wanted to start research but didn't realize there were doors that I would need to unlock before I could do so. Before even stepping foot into a prison, a therapist must be culturally attuned to their population of choice. And before a therapist thinks of entering a prison facility, they must have knowledge about the IRB process and plan for the time needed to go through it.

In the next sections, I discuss my findings. The auto-ethnographic method applied in this study was an instrument to answer the guiding research questions and to reflect on the themes that emerged during the research process. As stated earlier, the major research questions were: (1) what are some of the obstacles and difficulties in establishing structured research within the prison population? And (2) what can an art therapist begin to do to produce a change in the prison system and the inmates? These questions were further examined and explored by the sub-question: Why is it that so many people of color enter the prison system?

The Difficulties in Establishing Structured Research in Prison

When reflecting on my experience to conduct a study in prison, I came to understand that just as I am passionate to help and protect the prison population there are already things put in place to protect them (Narrative Three Reflection). The IRB process is a long and hard one and the main hurdle of beginning research in a prison. The IRB process questions your competency, your intentions, and your hopeful outcomes (Narrative Three Reflection). The IRB process forces you to understand more about your population and to be better equipped when working with your population. As stated in the literature review a counselor needs to be fully educated and competent about the prisons systems. I was so focused on the population itself and did not educate myself on certain policies or the “red tape” that was needed to enter the prison. I was forced to realize that the difficulties that delay conducting research in a correctional facility is the population itself. I now understand that the population consists of many subpopulations. Women, young men, persons with untreated diseases, etc. that are considered vulnerable and safeguards need to put in place to protect them. Now I have a better grasp on the safeguards put in place to protect the participants who may be involved in future study’s due to going through the IRB process. Now I, who wanted to bring change, could actually bring about ethical and forward-moving change without hurting the population I am so passionate about. I feel for the next future art therapist trying to conduct research in a prison, should understand that understanding the

population is one part of the full picture to do research. Understanding the system as a whole, the population, the prison policies, the vulnerabilities, and the IRB process is a complex undertaking that needs time to be taken apart and deciphered. As stated all throughout the literature review, research is needed for this population but to start research effectively one must understand the statutes and policies put in place to protect their population. The researcher needs to be able to uphold respect and justice towards their participants, provide informed and voluntary consent, and articulate clearly all the possible risks of their study and how they plan on protecting against those risks as well as the benefits the study hopes to provide (Narrative Three Reflection).

Art Therapist's Ability to Produce Change

An art therapist trying to begin to make change in the prison system is a tremendous feat. To be able to show that art therapy will be an effective intervention that will help the reduction of recidivism, one needs to be able to conduct a study. And to be able to do so, first, an art therapist must be competent in the history and foundations of prisons and why people of color are so disproportionately represented and make up the prison population and probably most of their participant sample (Narrative One and Two Reflections). Also, an art therapist conducting research in a prison needs to understand that their participants have stories and come from environments that may have led them to their current situations (Narrative Two Reflection). Our participants are products of their culture, products of history, and as art therapists, we must be therapists as well as activists that utilize social justice art to push reform (Literature Review, Narrative One, and Two Reflections). With this background information, an art therapist needs to understand the traditional treatments that are used with marginalized populations and learn how to mold their interventions to traditional treatments to successfully measure how their intervention will produce change (Narrative Two Reflection). And finally, an art therapist must also be fully educated on the protections put in place for prison populations to effectively begin research (Narrative Three Reflection).

Discussion (*or* What I Have Learned)

Throughout the process of this autoethnography, I have come to learn so much about the correctional system. I have come to learn about the history of prisons, its population, its culture, the history of minority incarceration, and even that inmates are a protected population in the matter of conducting research. Even though I could not directly interact with inmates and use art therapy, because of this new knowledge, through this autoethnography, I aim to help the next art

therapist to first and foremost see that there is a need for reform in correctional settings and see that they *can* be agents of change. I came to find that my role as an art therapist in the prison system/correctional setting was to share my experiences. Due to the circumstances, I felt like it was my duty to explain the milestones in my education that led to my deeper understanding of the prison system. Through my narratives and reflections, this thesis became a study that will inform future art therapists trying to conduct research so they will be better educated about the prison population and so they would not meet the same issues that thwarted my original purpose of my thesis. And to do this one must be acutely aware of their role to be educated on every aspect that involves the population (i.e. historically and culturally) so they can affectively develop useful interventions. And one must also fully understand their roles as a protector of human rights so they can effectively articulate the protections put in place for the participants of their study.

Through this autoethnography, I have also learned about the benefits of of this research method. I was able to connect my personal to the cultural. Through autoethnography I could investigate what being black means in America and how being black has a connection with the justice system. I could use my personal experiences through autoethnography to examine the broader and social justice issues that surround our prison system today as well as understanding and breaking apart the difficulties of implementing and conducting research in a correctional facility. Through autoethnography, I was afforded the space to contribute to the cultural understanding of prisons and their population and have my readers reflect and empathize with the cultural experiences that I have presented. Through reflection, I can inform and educate my audience reading about my experiences, so they become aware of realities that they may have never thought of before. And finally, through autoethnography I can begin a discussion that some people have never had; making the idea of prison more accessible to my audience.

Closing Remarks

To be an agent of change, we must understand that as humans we are products of our culture yet our culture is a product of our influence. And like us, an inmate's culture, beliefs, and values, are shaped by their past and current experiences (i.e. poverty, lack of education, criminal activity, living in prison, etc.). To put this idea about culture into context, I will discuss Philip Zimbardo and the famous Stanford study. For the study, each participant was carefully screened and randomly assigned the role of guard or prisoner. And within a mere two days, inmates and

guards became hostile. Guards became sadistic or non-feeling, and prisoners were emotionally broken. The study blew out of hand even though these were just “regular” people (Zimbardo 2008). Sadly “good” people are capable of “bad” things under the right circumstances.

In the present day, we imprison “bad” people and place them in the harsh prison environment and expect them to become functioning members of society after their time in prison. This train of thought is debunked by the high recidivism rates of convicted felons who enter the prison and leave prison with more maladaptive behaviors and criminal ways of thinking. So few inmates have been rehabilitated, compared to the many that may have been victimized or turned into violent offenders. Reform is needed. And anyone, specifically for the context of this study, an art therapist, can educate themselves on the foundations that make up the complex correctional system. They can plant seeds for reform and show that art therapy informed with all the cultural, historical, and ethical contexts, is readily available and relatable with the inmate population so art therapy treatment can be utilized as a new way of rehabilitation. Again we are products of our culture, but we can also influence culture; we can be activists as well as therapists that push for the reform of inmate mental health treatment.

I will close this thesis with a spoken word poem titled “My Path.” The poem was written by my family member who is currently incarcerated and was mentioned multiple times in this thesis. I end my thesis with this poem because he discusses his path that led him to incarceration and his future goals after his release. The poem represents that he understands where he came from, his wrong choices, the stereotypes in front of him, but his hope for a better future despite his current circumstances. This poem is a reflection of my thesis and how I narrated my journey to understanding my role as an art therapist in the prison setting and how it is possible to create change. It reflects my new understanding of the past circumstances of inmates, their existing vulnerabilities, and their future if given a second chance; which for me, is better mental health treatment. With this poem, I want to leave my readers with feelings of hope that will ignite their passion for continuing correctional setting research.

My Path

Can you see the world through my eyes?

I was once seeking the wrong route.

Deceit.

Lies.

As I reflect, check out my path, here's the stats, so you do the math.

I'm black! I'm black! I'm black!

I came from poverty and plus I have tats.

My parents did their best raising me, no doubt about that.

Let those who hate tell it, I was born to lose.

Excuse my language, but I raise a middle finger to those dudes.

If only for one day they could walk in my shoes.

Forget it!

Because right now I have a point to prove.

See I've got a drive to make it; to be successful in life, to form a bond with God,
have children and wife.

Yes, I've made mistakes in the past. But who hasn't?

Obstacles lie and everyone's path.

I've learned how to hurdle them, look back and laugh.

I will make a difference in This and the Next Generation!

Teaching to overcome through my experience and patience.

It is my declaration! My declaration!

I'll show them virtues, yet be raw and uncut knowledge, wisdom, understanding.

Helping them grow up.

I now pay attention to the signs that are constantly being sent.

I didn't choose my path. God chose. On that note this spoken word will come to a close.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

SIA NGAUJA

EDUCATION

Master of Science, Art Therapy, 3.57 GPA
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

Anticipated: December 2016

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Printmaking & Minor in Art History, 3.6 GPA
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

May 2014

RELATED EXPERIENCE

ELDER DAY STAY, Tallahassee, FL

January 2016-Current

Art Therapy Practicum Intern

Hours per week: 20-30

- Provide and created the first expressive mental health treatment program for elders experiencing psychological, physiological, and/or social difficulties in an outpatient day care setting for the elderly with psychological conditions, including dementia and Alzheimer's.
- Adapt psychotherapy and expressive therapies interventions according to physiological or sensory deficits, including blindness, deafness, and partial paralysis to stimulate clients intellectually, socially, and orient the clients.
- Lead groups of greater and less than 20 senior citizens in potential-based creative learning and also counsel clients on an individual basis.

TWIN OAKS LIBERTY WILDERNESS CROSSROADS CAMP, Liberty County, FL

August 2015-December 2015

Art Therapy Practicum Intern

Hours per week: 20-30

- Facilitated individual and group interventions with young adults with psychiatric diagnoses and a variety of clinical and developmental needs in long-term in-patient behavioral residential facility.
- Administered psychotherapy to address goals of emotional regulation, social skill development, and behavioral modification. Sessions included anger management, stress management, frustration acceptance, and understanding self-concept.
- Collaborated with mental health coworkers as a team overseeing a 37-client caseload.
- Maintained records of all sessions and participated in weekly supervision to conceptualize and plan for counseling.

HEALTH SOUTH, Tallahassee, FL

January 2015- April 2015

Art Therapy Practicum Intern

Hours per week: 15-20

- Performed individual and group rehabilitative treatment for the elderly to increase muscle strengthening, pain tolerance, visual function, range of motion, and strengthen motor coordination in hands and arms.
- Engaged clients to think about and begin to understand a positive self- concept as well as redirect maladaptive feelings such as depression and anxiety through creative expression.
- Completed assessments of clients and works created during sessions as well as maintained records of all sessions, and attended group supervision to further develop an understanding of clients and facilitate beneficial treatment.

PYRAMID STUDIOS, Tallahassee, FL

August 2014-December 2014

Art Therapy Practicum Intern

Hours per week: 7-10

- Applied interactive art experiences for individuals with moderate to severe developmental and physical disabilities.
- Evaluated individual's needs, art ability, and other talents based upon observation and consultation with direct care staff.
- Developed treatment plans aligning with the facilities standards and individual's needs. Also documented and maintained all records of all sessions to discuss in supervision to better the client's progression towards treatment plans.
- Established supportive therapeutic space for clients, intellectually engaged, and empowered client's sense of self through the artistic process.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SOLUTIONS, Jacksonville, FL

May 2014-Current

Direct Care Worker Intern (Summers Only)

Hours per week: 7-10

- Assist clients with severe mental and/ or physical disabilities with developing life skills such as modeling ways of proper eating etiquette or assisting the clients with grooming.
- Present adaptive ways for clients to fulfill activities of daily living to enable client to take on daily tasks independently without the aid of a direct care worker over time.
- Guide clients in the development of appropriate social skills through local community interaction.
- Analyze, organize, and time stamp records pertaining to the clients.

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

FSU DEPARTMENT OF ART EDUCATION, Tallahassee, FL

August 2014-Current

Graduate Assistant

Hours per week: 10

- Monitor and facilitate lab schedules and hours as well as aid lab users with printing and computer issues.
- Interviewed past alumni as well as consolidate current events of the department to type, edit, create, and print Department Newsletter using Illustrator with the help of a committee and supervision.
- Designed, created a budget, and mobilized a committee in the execution of a department and community mural for Gaines Street, Tallahassee with 7 Days Opening Nights.

SEQUENTIAL ARTISTS WORKSHOP (SAW), Gainesville, FL June 2013 – July 2013

Intern

Hours per week: 10-12

- Supported the employer to engage the students in their artwork as well as curate the students work for art shows.
- Documented events, printed and bounded the work of the artists in book form, updated company blog, and mailing list.
- Created brochures for potential students and community groups under supervision.
- Adapted well and was able to be versatile when working with a team of staff to achieve a multitude of responsibilities needed for the facility to run functionally.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

• *American Heart Association CPR AED and First Aid Certified, July 2014, Saint Luke's Hospital*

□ Renewal Date: July 2016

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- *Graduate Assistantship & Funding recipient, FSU Department of Art Education, 2014-Current*
- *Summa Cum Laude Graduate, University of Florida, 2014*
- *Dean's List recipient, UF Department of Fine Arts, 2010-2014*