



# Research Publication

Process evaluation of the Practice  
Guide for Intervention (PGI)

Staff perceptions of community  
supervision in the context of change

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## 1.1 Background and methods

A growing body of evidence indicates that suitably designed and implemented interventions to address offenders' criminogenic needs and promote behaviour change can reduce recidivism. Correctional services across international jurisdictions have thus developed models of community supervision that deliver behaviour change interventions to large cohorts of offenders in the community. In line with this, Corrective Services New South Wales (NSW) has recently instituted the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI), a suite of exercises and activities Community Corrections Officers (CCOs) can implement with offenders under their supervision. Implemented across NSW since 2016, the PGI aims to increase the behaviour change content of face-to-face supervision sessions with offenders and promote CCOs as agents of change.

Successful uptake of the PGI depends on how well it is accepted and delivered by CCOs. This may be challenging, as previous models of community supervision have traditionally focused on monitoring compliance or addressing social welfare issues. An additional complexity is that uptake of a rehabilitative orientation to community supervision may not necessarily achieve optimal outcomes if this orientation is not balanced with other functions of supervising officers. Positive outcomes of supervision may be achieved if officers display a blend of care and control, or develop a fair but firm dual-role relationship with offenders while also monitoring compliance and working towards changing their behaviours.

This study aims to explore how NSW CCOs perceive and deliver the aims, core functions and activities of community supervision in the context of implementation of the PGI. The study also aims to examine how variance in officer perceptions is associated with their acceptance of roles and activities promoted by the PGI; and the extent to which implementation of the PGI has achieved a shift towards the rehabilitation function and agent of change focus in supervision.

This study was informed by semi-structured interviews with 43 CCOs. The CCOs were asked to respond to a series of both closed- and open-ended questions. Qualitative data were analysed using a three-pronged approach, including content analysis, grounded theory and discourse analysis. Quantitative data were analysed using mostly nonparametric methods.

## 1.2 Key findings

In general, CCOs had consistent views of the overarching aims of community supervision in reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety. They also held strong and positive views towards the rehabilitation function compared to the other two functions, compliance and social work. CCOs' views about the importance of the rehabilitation function were found to have a significant positive association with their experiences in using the PGI. The CCOs indicated that following the implementation of the PGI model, they had become more aware of the importance of rehabilitating offenders and their role as agents of change.

While there was general consensus among CCOs about the value of the behaviour change function of community supervision, they appeared to endorse different suites of supervision activities and mechanisms to promote change. Some CCOs adopted a more traditional program broker role, primarily providing offenders with information and referrals to external programs. Others took on a more direct and active approach to instil offenders' behaviour change by using PGI exercises in addition to providing referrals to external services.

Although rehabilitation was perceived as having the greatest importance among the functions of community supervision, CCOs showed an acknowledgement and appreciation of the compliance and social work functions. CCOs also discussed the importance of building high quality dual-role relationships with the offenders as well

as effecting behaviour changes based on respect for their autonomy and empowerment. By implication, while embracing a rehabilitative ideal, they did not minimise their dual-role relationship with offenders or show signs of increased permissiveness. The CCOs saw providing care and exercising control to ensure offender compliance as integral and intertwined components of their community supervision work.

Most CCOs appeared to appreciate the PGI as a rehabilitative tool. Their uptake and delivery of the PGI did not appear to vary as a function of differences in their perceptions of the core functions of community supervision. There were indications that implementation of the PGI model of supervision increased CCOs' identification with their role as agents of change and awareness of the importance of offender rehabilitation. Due to the absence of pre-PGI data, however, it was not possible to conclude whether CCOs had previously been effective agents of change, or whether their movement towards becoming change agents occurred primarily as a function of the PGI.

### **1.3 Conclusion**

Overall, CCOs are receptive to models of service delivery that emphasise the rehabilitative functions of community supervision as a means of promoting behaviour change and reducing reoffending, while also maintaining complementary roles of supervision (e.g., monitoring compliance). However, CCOs may benefit from ongoing professional development and communication to increase their identification as critical, active agents of change with offenders, and their understanding of how the operational components of the PGI can assist them to achieve rehabilitation outcomes.

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## 2 INTRODUCTION

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A growing body of empirical evidence has indicated that suitably designed and implemented interventions to address offenders' criminogenic needs and promote behaviour change can reduce recidivism and enhance public safety (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Trotter, 2015). Recognition of the role and effectiveness of offender intervention has contributed to the shifting ideology among various international jurisdictions from a largely punitive towards a more rehabilitative orientation (Lipsey, 2009). In line with this, the delivery of offender intervention programs has become a core component of service delivery models of correctional services around the world, both in relation to case management of offenders in custody and in the community (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

Principles of effective offender intervention are established in the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) model of correctional supervision (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Ricks & Loudon, 2014), a model that advocates for an offender-centric and individualised approach in service delivery (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). In the past three decades, RNR principles have emerged as the dominant paradigm for offender rehabilitation, and are the foundation upon which all other principles of offender intervention lay (Labrecque, Schweitzer, & Smith, 2014). The basic premise of the RNR model is that offender interventions are most effective when they provide offenders at higher risk of recidivism more intensive supervision and services (Lowenkamp, Latessa, & Holsinger, 2006); target offenders' changeable (dynamic) risk factors for offending, such as procriminal attitudes (Andrews & Dowden, 2006); and are delivered in a manner that is responsive to offenders' learning styles and motivation level (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Landenberger & Lipsey, 2005).

While RNR principles have been historically applied to the delivery of structured interventions such as group offender treatment programs, in recent years they have increasingly been used to guide more systematic offender supervision and case management processes. This includes models for supervision of offenders who are serving parole or other orders in the community. Established examples include the Citizenship program in the United Kingdom (UK) (Bruce & Hollin, 2015), the Strategic Training Initiative in Community Supervision (STICS) in Canada (Bonta, Bourgon, Ruggie, Gress, & Gutierrez, 2013), the Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) (Labrecque, Smith, Schweitzer, & Thompson, 2013) and the Staff Training Aimed at Reducing Re-arrest (STARR) (Robinson et al., 2012) in the United States (US). These models aim to exploit the potential to deliver behaviour change interventions to large cohorts of offenders who are supervised in the community every year, many of whom would otherwise have limited opportunity to attend formal structured programs. There are indications that interventions adhering to RNR principles may also have greater impacts on reoffending when delivered in the community compared to custody (Andrews, 2011).

In recognition of the shifting paradigm towards a more rehabilitative orientation observed across jurisdictions, NSW Community Corrections has instituted the Practice Guide for Intervention (PGI) from 2016. The PGI aimed to improve on the existing community supervision model by introducing a structured framework for intervention that incorporates principles of effective offender treatment and promotes greater adherence to the RNR model. Designed as a practical tool to support CCOs to be effective agents of change, the PGI contains a series of 56 exercises that can be undertaken with offenders as part of supervision sessions (Corrective Services NSW, 2016).

Implementation of the PGI was staggered and started with an initial introductory period that ran from June to December 2016. During this period CCOs were encouraged to use the PGI with offenders under their supervision; however use of the PGI was discretionary and not associated with any mandatory requirements or related performance indicators. During the second phase of PGI rollout, which occurred between January and May 2017, CCOs were required to deliver a number of mandatory PGI exercises associated with the initial assessment and case formulation process (1.1—Supervision Expectations, and 1.2—Offence Mapping) and

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encouraged to deliver other non-mandatory exercises where appropriate. Operational standards and performance indicators for PGI delivery were instituted from June 2017 with requirements that a minimum of 70% of supervision sessions include use of the PGI, and 90% of all case plans incorporate PGI modules other than the initial assessment and planning exercises, for all medium or above risk offenders who commenced supervision after December 2016 (see Thaler, Chong, Raudino, & Howard, 2019).

By mandating delivery of behaviour change exercises to offenders in supervisory sessions, the PGI has clear implications for the core functions of supervision and by extension, the roles and functions that CCOs may be expected to identify with as part of their work. For example, implementation of the PGI by necessity promotes CCOs as active agents of change at the systemic level, and both procedural delivery of the PGI and adoption of the agent of change role are expected to be achieved through induction in the model for new and existing staff. In this case it may be hypothesised that uptake and use of the PGI may be influenced by the extent to which implementation of the model is successful in instilling such functions.

Evidence suggests that the extent to which supervision models successfully instil offender behaviour change depends on how well these models are accepted and delivered by supervising officers (Bonta, Ruge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008). This can be challenging given that historically, a number of core functions have been promoted to and exercised by CCOs. For example, under the 'get tough' or law enforcement model of community corrections, which relied excessively on compliance monitoring, detection and punishment, supervising officers across various jurisdictions were encouraged to adopt a punitive or control orientation (Gleicher, Manchak, & Cullen, 2013, p.22). Empirical reviews have found that the 'get tough' approach not only has a negligible or null impact on recidivism, but could potentially increase the likelihood of reoffending (Cullen, Wright, & Applegate, 1996; Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996).

On the other hand, community supervision has also often been associated with the task of managing offender stability in the community and addressing social welfare concerns such as employment and housing. While addressing factors associated with offenders' instrumental needs and integration into the community are important for outcomes (e.g., Berghuis, 2018; Morony, Wei, van Doorn, Howard, & Galouzis, in preparation), there is the concern that a social work orientation may be detrimental if it encourages officers to focus on noncriminogenic needs at the expense of addressing criminogenic needs (Paparozzi & Gendreau, 2005).

Given this historical context, it may not be assumed that a behaviour change focused model of community supervision such as the PGI readily aligns with the existing supervision orientations maintained by CCOs. This may have unintended impacts on implementation and uptake of such a model. An example of this was evidenced in the seminal 'Black Box of Community Supervision' study conducted in the Manitoba province of Canada. Bonta and colleagues (2008) found that despite the provision of case planning protocols and tools that promoted adherence to the RNR principles, CCOs demonstrated poor adherence to some of the basic principles of effective offender intervention and rarely acted as agents of change or applied behavioural interventions. Offenders' criminogenic needs, such as antisocial attitudes, often went unaddressed in sessions and officers failed to apply skills that could instil cognitive, attitudinal and behaviour change. Officers also appeared to overemphasise the importance of compliance monitoring and spent a disproportionately large amount of supervision session time on the procedural and enforcement aspects of supervision.

An additional complexity is that uptake of a rehabilitative orientation to community supervision may not necessarily achieve optimal outcomes if such an orientation is not balanced with other roles and functions of supervising officers. There is evidence that positive outcomes of supervision can be achieved when officers deliver a blend of care and control, or develop a robust dual-role relationship, with offenders (Manchak, Kennealy, & Skeem, 2014; Skeem & Manchak, 2008). This in particular requires the officers to develop a warm, open, and fair but firm high quality relationship with offenders while monitoring compliance to ensure public safety and working towards changing offender attitudes and behaviours in a prosocial direction (Kennealy, Skeem, Manchak, & Eno Loudon, 2012; Manchak et al., 2014). The quality of the dual-role relationship has

been found to be strongly associated with recidivism and other outcomes of supervision (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). In this regard both the care and control aspects of the relationship have interacting roles in the quality of the relationship and supervision outcomes, so that overemphasis of one role over another could potentially have deleterious effects (Skeem & Manchak, 2008).

On this ground, understanding the perspectives of CCOs in relation to the aims, core functions and activities of supervision may be instrumental to the success of the initial and ongoing implementation of a behaviour change model such as the PGI (Ricks & Eno Loudon, 2014). To date, however, little is known about the supervision orientations of CCOs and the impact of their subjective perceptions on supervision activity and program uptake. Most of the existing studies focus on the treatment programs themselves, utilise field-based observational methods to infer an officer' approach to supervision, or examine officer perceptions in an institutional context (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2011).

The aim of this study is to explore how NSW CCOs perceive and deliver the aims, core functions and activities of community supervision in the context of the introduction and ongoing implementation of the PGI model across the jurisdiction. Core functions of supervision examined in this study include those of rehabilitation (to effect behaviour change), compliance (to ensure adherence to legal conditions), and social work (to assist offenders with social support or welfare issues). This study also aims to examine how variances in officer perceptions accounts for variances in their acceptance of key supervisory roles and activities promoted by the PGI; and the extent to which implementation of the PGI has achieved a shift towards the rehabilitation function and agent of change focus.

The current study is part of a series of process evaluation studies that aim to evaluate the implementation of the new PGI model of community supervision delivered by Corrective Services NSW. Evaluation of the PGI is aligned with the NSW Department of Justice Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the NSW Government Strategy to Reduce Reoffending.

This study addresses the following research questions:

- What are CCOs' perceptions of the overarching aims of community supervision?
- What are CCOs' perceptions of core functions of community supervision to achieve these aims?
- What factors contribute to CCOs' perceptions of the core functions of supervision?
- How do CCOs enact the core functions of community supervision, and in particular the rehabilitation function, through their supervisory activities?
- How has the implementation of the PGI assisted CCOs to deliver the rehabilitation function?
- How do CCOs' perceptions of the core functions of supervision relate to their perceptions of the PGI and their associated role as agents of change?

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## 3 METHOD

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### 3.1 Sampling

CCOs were recruited to participate in semi-structured face-to-face interviews, which were conducted between October and December 2017. The interviews were conducted as part of a series of process evaluation studies examining the implementation of the new PGI model of community supervision.

Initially, a total sample of 56 CCOs at 12 Community Correction offices in six different regions across NSW were recruited using a sampling approach approximate to that of a multi-stage cluster sampling method. The aims of the method were to maximise the diversity of the geographical locations (metropolitan versus regional versus remote), the recruited offices as well as the supervision experiences and characteristics of the recruited officers. Since 13 officers worked in a parole office and therefore did not have community supervision workload, they were excluded from the total sample. This resulted in a superordinate sample of 43 officers whose rated perceptions and narratives are explored in the current study. For more information about the sampling procedure see Thaler et al. (2019).

### 3.2 Sample characteristics

Descriptive statistics of the characteristics of the 43 CCOs are given Table 1. The CCOs had a median age of 46 years old (range = 22–67) and had spent a median time of 2 years working as CCOs (range = 0–35). To aid with further analysis, the variable ‘Time working as a CCO’ was recoded into a categorical variable with 5 levels as shown in Table 1. Almost half (48.8%) of the CCOs received PGI training as part of their core training at induction. The remaining 51.2% of CCOs did not receive PGI core training as part of their induction since these officers completed their induction before PGI implementation.

Table 1. *Characteristics of officers in the sample*

Variable	%/Median (range)
Age	46 (22–67)
Time working as a CCO	2 (0–35)
1 year or less (0)	20.9%
Less than 2 years (1)	20.9%
At least 2–3 years (2)	18.6%
At least 4–10 years (3)	18.6%
Over 10 years (4)	20.9%
PGI training at induction	
No (0)	51.2%
Yes (1)	48.8%
Time using the PGI	
Before December 2016 (1)	74.4%
After December 2016 (2)	25.6%



'Time using the PGI' or the length of time CCOs had been using the PGI at the time of interview is another important variable that was applied for the purposes of this study as a proxy for CCOs' experience in using the PGI. Three-quarters (74.4%; 32/43) of the interviewed CCOs started using the PGI in supervision before December 2016 (i.e., around the time when the PGI underwent mandatory state-wide implementation). Approximately one quarter (25.6%; 11/43) of the CCOs commenced using the PGI between December 2016 and July 2017. It should be noted that within the context of the PGI implementation, July 2017 was the cut-off date before full KPIs to monitor officer compliance with PGI use would be enacted (see Thaler et al., 2019).

### 3.3 Data collection procedure

The participating CCOs were asked to respond to a series of closed- and open-ended questions during the interviews. Questions relevant to the current study included those that explored officer perceptions of the overarching aims, core functions and activities of community supervision; as well as their perceptions of the utility of the PGI. Open-ended questions were flexibly discussed in accordance with a semi-structured interview approach. Closed-ended questions were addressed consistently with all participants and followed a 5-point Likert scale format (for example, "On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = not important at all and 5 = extremely important, how important is rehabilitation in offender supervision?").

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim following the completion of data collection. Responses to the closed-ended questions and enquiries about demographic characteristics were collated for data analysis.

### 3.4 Data analysis

#### 3.4.1 Qualitative data analysis

Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed using a combination of content analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1991; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), discourse analysis (Gee, 2004; Van Dijk, 1985) and grounded theory approaches (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) using the software package QSR NVIVO 12 Pro. This three-pronged approach enabled the optimal exploration of themes in the data, delving in further depth to the meanings and discourses explicitly and implicitly expressed in the interviewees' narratives using a bottom-up approach. This approach also enabled the core messages relating to the aims and purposes of the current study to be captured (Gubrium, Holstein, Marvasti, & McKinney, 2012).

Using an iterative process (Dey, 2003), themes were developed and used to construct an initial coding framework by two research analysts. The framework was updated and refined as part of an iterative intercoder reliability testing process until an acceptable level of agreement was reached ( $k = .71$ ) (Campbell, Quincy, Osseman, & Pedersen, 2013; Landis & Koch, 1977). The final coding framework was then used to analyse all the transcribed interviews.

#### 3.4.2 Quantitative data analysis

As data included a mix of both categorical and continuous data, descriptive analyses included frequency and percentage statistics for the former; and mean or median statistics for latter, depending on distribution of the target variables. Since the outcome variables of the current study are measured on an ordinal scale (for example, rated importance of the rehabilitation function), most of the inferential statistics utilised were nonparametric. Differences in the mean ranks of the two related sample were examined using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests. Categorical and ordinal association between the variables of interest were explored using Chi-square, or Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma or Somers' D where appropriate.

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## 4 RESULTS

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### 4.1 Perceptions of the overarching aim of community supervision

To explore CCOs' views of the overarching aim of community supervision, the following open-ended question was asked as part of the semi-structured interviews: "What do you think are the main aims of supervising offenders in the community?" Thematic analysis of responses revealed a strong consensus among the CCOs with almost all, directly or indirectly, stating that the aims of supervising offenders in the community are to reduce recidivism and enhance community safety.

Discourse analysis showed that CCOs' responses to this question clustered into two groups. The first group, although less common and smaller in size (11%), primarily quoted the Department's stance in terms of the general aim of community corrections as their answer, and did not provide much elaboration. These CCOs used terms such as "cliché", "Gospel", "our statement" or even "our buzz-word" to contextualise their answers. Some responses included:

*"Well, the cliché is to reduce recidivism." (I37)*

*"Well, obviously you know we talk about the buzz-words; we've got to protect the community and that sort of stuff." (I46)*

Comprising a larger proportion of the interviewed CCOs (89%), the second group articulated the aim of community supervision based on their personal perspective and experience. These CCOs tended to provide more elaborate and in-depth answers. They explained that reducing recidivism and enhancing community safety are the overarching, long-term goals of community corrections:

*"I'd advise it from my perspective; obviously the Department's objectives are well documented, but from my perspective isn't too far from the Department's objectives, which is to minimise the likelihood of that person coming back before the court again for the same criminal offence or similar. So recidivism but also for any criminal offence." (I28)*

*"Okay, we're trying to reduce recidivism and to bring about change in people's lives to get them out of the cycle. To empower them to do that change, not for us to do it from them." (I26)*

*"Yes, the main aim is, of course, we assist them to comply with their orders—that's one thing, but behind that is the: don't reoffend—that's the main thing, and of course, assist them looking for jobs, and address any issue they have, for example, drugs, mental health, [and] any other [issue]." (I10)*

### 4.2 Perceptions of the core functions of community supervision

When discussing the overarching aims of supervision, CCOs referred to a range of intermediate goals or supervision functions that would assist in reducing reoffending and enhancing community safety. For example, officers described achieving aims by ensuring offenders' compliance with their legal orders (the compliance function); rehabilitating offenders so as to promote behaviour change (the rehabilitation function); addressing non-criminogenic yet important factors that enable offender reintegration into community, such as finding accommodation or employment (the social work function); or a combination of these. By implication, while there was a broad consensus among the interviewed CCOs as to the overarching aims of supervision, there was some level of divergence in opinion regarding the functions of supervision that help achieve these aims.

To further explore this divergence, CCOs were asked to respond to a series of three 5-point Likert scale questions to rate the importance of each of the three core functions of supervision, namely rehabilitation, compliance and social work. For example, “On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = not important at all, and 5 = extremely important), how important is rehabilitation in offender supervision?” Analysis of the CCOs’ ratings exemplified the level of divergence in perceived intermediate aims signified earlier. On average, CCOs returned high ratings for all core functions. Both ratings of the rehabilitation (range = 3–5) and compliance (range = 2–5) functions had a median of 5, while their ratings for the social work function had a median of 4 (range = 1–5).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of officer ratings for each supervision function. It was observed that the rating distribution for the rehabilitation function was negatively skewed, indicating the presence of ceiling effects. As further indicated by data breakdown, 41 out of 43 (95%) CCOs had a rating of 4 or above for rehabilitation. Only two officers (5%) gave a neutral rating of 3, and no officers gave negative value ratings of 2 or lower.

Whereas ceiling effects were not as prevalent in CCOs’ ratings of the compliance function, the distribution of compliance ratings was similar to that of rehabilitation, with 22 officers (51%) having a rating of 5; 9 (21%) with a rating of 4 (or, 72% with a rating of 4 or above in total); and 11 (26%) with a neutral rating of 3.

In contrast to the other core functions, CCOs’ ratings for social work appeared to follow a normal distribution. However, there was a slightly higher proportion of those with high ratings (53% with a rating of 4 or above in total) compared to those with lower ratings (21% with a rating of 2 or below in total).

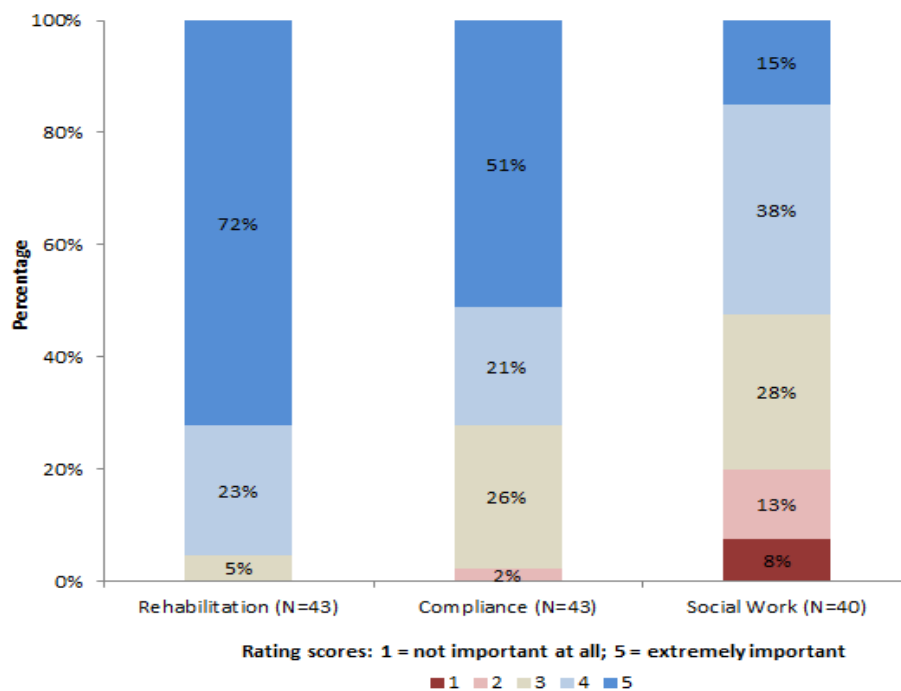


Figure 1. CCOs’ ratings of the importance of rehabilitation, compliance, and social work functions of community supervision.

To determine if there is a statistically significant difference in CCOs’ ratings of each supervision function, a series of non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were conducted. On average, CCOs’ ratings of the rehabilitation function were significantly higher than ratings of the compliance function ( $Z=-2.74$ ,  $p = .006$ ), which in turn were significantly higher than their ratings of the social work function ( $Z=-3.55$ ,  $p<.0005$ ).

Taking these results altogether, it appears that while generally valuing all three core functions of community supervision, the interviewed CCOs had a more positive view of the importance of the rehabilitation function compared to the compliance and social work functions. Social work was viewed as relatively less important compared to the other two functions.

### 4.3 Factors associated with perceptions of the core functions

The previous analysis suggests that CCOs generally held a positive view of all three core functions of community supervision although often prioritised the rehabilitation function in particular. The aim of this section is to examine the factors that may contribute to CCOs' perceptions of these functions.

Given the transitional context of the current study's data collection (i.e., during implementation of the PGI), it is likely that variance in CCOs' perceptions of supervision functions could be a product of their pre-PGI experience (such as experience working as a CCO), or equally, implementation of the PGI itself. For example, implementation of the PGI model may have promoted a deeper appreciation of the rehabilitation function of supervision. Alternatively, CCOs' existing and positive views of the rehabilitation function may have predated the PGI which facilitated its implementation.

A series of non-parametric methods including Chi-square and Somers' D for independence were conducted where appropriate. The variable 'Time working as a CCO' was used as a predictor representing CCOs' pre-PGI experience whereas 'PGI training at induction' and 'Time using the PGI' were used as predictors associated with implementation of the PGI.

Results are shown in Table 2. There were no statistically significant associations between CCOs' rated perceptions of each of the core functions and their time working as a CCO, or whether or not they had PGI training at induction.

*Table 2. Bivariate associations between officers' characteristics and their perceptions of the importance of rehabilitation, compliance and social work functions of community supervision.*

Factor	Rehabilitation	Compliance	Social Work
Time working as a CCO	d = .064, p = .579	d = -.097, p = .613	d = -.218, p = .059
PGI training at induction	$\chi^2 (2) = .67, p = .716$	$\chi^2 (3) = 4.03, p = .258$	$\chi^2 (4) = 6.02, p = .197$
Time using the PGI	$\chi^2 (2) = 5.21, p = .074$	$\chi^2 (3) = 8.09, p = .044$	$\chi^2 (4) = 3.59, p = .464$

However, there was an association between the CCOs' time using the PGI and their ratings of the compliance function with a positive, moderate effect size ( $\Phi$ /Cramer's V = .434) that was statistically significant ( $\chi^2 (3) = 8.09, p = .044$ ). Examination of covariances between the variables indicated that the longer CCOs had used the PGI, the more positively they viewed the compliance function.

The association between CCOs' time using the PGI and their ratings of the rehabilitation function was marginally significant ( $\chi^2 (2) = 5.21, p = .074$ ), with a positive, moderate effect size  $\Phi$ /Cramer's V = .348. Further examination of correspondence between the variables indicated that CCOs who started using the PGI before December 2016 were more prevalent in giving highly positive or ceiling ratings of the rehabilitation function relative to those who started using the PGI after December 2016.

Taken together, the results indicated that the longer CCOs had used the PGI (i.e., the more exposure they had), the more positive perception of both the rehabilitation and compliance functions they had.

## 4.4 Delivery of the core functions of community supervision

Additional interview questions further explored CCOs' views about the core functions of community supervision and how they enacted or delivered these functions. Discourse analysis of the CCOs' narratives confirmed that they valued the rehabilitation function on average. However, the results diverged from the quantitative findings, indicating that CCOs did not appear to hold extreme views towards any particular function or overemphasise one function to the extent that it diminished another function.

This minor discrepancy between results of qualitative and quantitative analyses could be a function of the ontological and epistemological differences between qualitative and quantitative data and research traditions. The social constructivist nature of qualitative data or how people construct their views and perceive their experience offers another possible explanation for these findings.

The next section provides a synthesis of the overarching, common narratives in relation to the CCOs' views about each core function, the association between rehabilitation and offender behaviour change, as well as the dual-role nature of their work. Where there is a noticeable difference in the perceptions of CCOs, this will be highlighted in the discussion.

### 4.4.1 Rehabilitation and behaviour change are the most important aspects of a CCO's work

Qualitative narratives of the interviewed CCOs confirmed the perceived importance of the rehabilitation function, with 81% highlighting that rehabilitating offenders and changing their behaviour was part of their role. Although the CCOs who provided a higher rating for the compliance function generally perceived rehabilitating offenders to be "the hard part", complex, challenging and even "not realistic with some individuals", they agreed that rehabilitation is an essential part of community supervision, and of their work:

*"I guess, compliance you would achieve by doing what you need to do as per their order...I think in terms of behaviour change, it's about...oh, that's the hard part. But definitely in the general scheme of things that's what you want. You want that person to go out eventually as a changed person." (I11)*

They also expressed views that for rehabilitation and behaviour change to occur effectively, both the officer and the offender should be held accountable. The majority of the CCOs referred to themselves as the "conductor"—or the agent of change, who would provide the conditions and guidance that enable change. They also discussed the importance of having a robust understanding of the PGI and its modules, and how to apply these appropriately and flexibly in their change intervention endeavours:

*"We target some PGI modules towards their offending behaviour, however it doesn't always work out that way. So, knowing most of the modules comes in handy because you can walk into an interview; there's a crisis; there's a different attitude, so it's about being able to adapt those modules to the interview." (I06)*

While acknowledging their role and accountability, the CCOs asserted that it was the offenders who are the real driver for change, who need to evolve to become their own agent of change, to develop their change agency, and to demonstrate the willingness and readiness for change. Without these, effecting behaviour change is challenging:

*"We know where we want to go with them and we guide them through that process, but really they're the ones that are driving this, driving the answers and we [are] kind of like a tugboat, keep them in the middle so they don't run aground kind of thing." (I42)*

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#### 4.4.2 Compliance is important and depends on various factors at the offender level

Discourse analysis of CCOs' narratives confirmed that while officers held strong views of the importance of rehabilitation, they did not appear to disregard the importance of the compliance function. In fact, almost half (49%) discussed the importance of enforcing offender compliance with the requirements of their orders; and how this could help achieve the overarching aims of supervision.

The CCOs explained what ensuring compliance meant to them and how it could be done either by collecting information from the offenders as part of the supervision meeting or via home visits and third party validity checks. They also expressed the view that ensuring compliance is the essence of community supervision and the legal requirement of their work. However, ensuring compliance did not necessarily have to be the top priority, the core activity or main content of the supervision interviews:

*“So the first one is compliance. So they're on a legal order. There are certain conditions that they must adhere to. Which, I guess, is probably part of the community safety side of things, and community safety is now a really major aspect of our supervision. So there's the compliance side of things. But then there's also the offender engagement and looking at their behavioural change.” (I42)*

The CCOs also noted that the extent to which ensuring compliance is important depends on various factors at the offender level, including the severity of their offence(s), the type of order, and their likelihood of reoffending. For example, the need for compliance is stricter for an offender with a higher risk of reoffending and who committed an offence that jeopardises community safety and morale (such as, a violent offender or a compulsive sex offender with multiple records of offences):

*“Look, I think there's a range between probably two and four depending on the type of order, the conditions around that order and the seriousness of the offence.” (I42)*

In line with this, CCOs also identified that an overemphasis on compliance monitoring can be counterproductive in general and detrimental to the quality of the working relation with the offender. By extension, while valuing the importance of compliance, they appeared to disapprove an overly punitive or authoritarian approach to supervision:

*“I think that there are ways to manage the risk if you like and if you come down too hard with the compliance things it can deteriorate your working relationship. Not just your working relationship but how they view a community-based sentencing as being just compliance waiving a big stick at me, you can all go and get sodded sort of thing which I don't think benefits anybody.” (I55)*

#### 4.4.3 The organic balance between compliance and rehabilitation

In discussing their role of ensuring compliance and doing rehabilitation work, most CCOs expressed the view that ensuring compliance would not necessarily instil offender behaviour change alone:

*“If all we do is monitor, then when do we motivate them to make changes? Sessions used to be all about monitoring, but it didn't have the impact necessary to make them turn things around. They had less accountability in dealing with their issues, because we wouldn't go very deep—just dealing with superficial stuff: Did you get into trouble with cops? Did you use drugs?” (I17)*

However, it was compliance with sentencing orders that was the practical and legal reason for the offenders' engagement with Community Corrections; and it was through the time spent to monitor compliance that CCOs could instil behaviour change. While compliance monitoring and effecting behaviour change appeared to be two different functions, and worked differently, they were perceived as being able to work together and

dynamically enable the accomplishment of the other. In ensuring both compliance and effecting behaviour change, the CCOs generally saw themselves as wearing “multiple hats”:

*“Making sure that they're not a risk to the community. Like a risk assessment and things like that. And, then behaviour change. So, using that time. That you are monitoring their compliance to make sure that we can affect any change in attitudes and behaviour. And, so I would say, it as [is] two different things. But, you can work them together quite well.” (I11)*

In short, while generally valuing and prioritising the importance of rehabilitation, the CCOs also had a positive view toward ensuring compliance, or a balanced view of the caring and control parts of their role. Providing care and exercising control to ensure offender compliance, and thus enhance public safety, are both important to them. By implication, these are integral, intertwined components of their supervision work:

*“I think at the end of the day we are still an authoritarian figure in their life to a certain degree. But there is that balance between them knowing that there is [sic] certain rules and obligations, which is either the parole order or their bond that they have to comply with. But also, that part where that they can look at us to get help if they are willing to have it, if that makes sense?” (I41)*

#### **4.4.4 Addressing social work issues is important but is not part of a CCO’s duty**

Analysis of the CCOs’ narratives confirmed the results of quantitative measures by indicating that officers generally viewed the social work aspect as less important compared with the other two functions. Only 6% of interviewed CCOs mentioned the provision of social work support to offenders, such as assisting them with finding accommodation and employment. The majority of them expressed the view that addressing offender social welfare issues is not part of a CCO’s duty, but social workers’ and other agencies’ responsibilities. There was also some indication that this view is endorsed by Community Corrections at the policy level:

*“We focus on our core stuff, do it well, don't get sidetracked with social stuff. There are other agencies that do that.” (I27)*

*“I mean, we’ve been repeatedly told that we’re not social workers.” (I29)*

Some CCOs also felt that addressing these welfare type issues is a practice that would have no effect on changing offender behaviour:

*“I'd see that probably as one of the least important things, definitely important to refer out but that kind of stuff doesn't stop someone from committing crimes. You can do all of that, get them a house, get them a job and all that kind of stuff but it's not going to change behaviour unless you're doing other stuff.” (I53)*

A majority of the CCOs (77%) acknowledged that while addressing social work issues helps with offender responsivity, their assistance is limited to the provision of relevant information or referrals to external sources of help based on offenders’ assessed needs:

*“Yes, you know, like, that is an important part as well, finding jobs, so what we do now, we don't do much on that. We just provide them with information.” (I10)*

## **4.5 Impacts of the PGI on delivery of the rehabilitation function**

A central feature of the PGI model is the system-wide promotion of CCOs as active agents of change and focus on the rehabilitation or behaviour change function of supervision sessions. An important focus of the current inquiry was therefore to understand officers’ perceptions of the PGI, and the extent to which implementation of the model has impacted on their perspective of the rehabilitation function, roles as agents of change, and

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use of supervision activities to deliver the rehabilitation function. To explore this, a number of relevant open-ended questions were asked in the interviews.

#### 4.5.1 Perceptions of the PGI

CCOs discussed how introduction of the PGI fits with their views about the core functions of community supervision, the dual-role nature of their work, and the association between the rehabilitation function and the specific idea of being an agent of change. A number of important themes were identified in their narratives. One of the major themes discussed was that the PGI is a rehabilitative tool or resource in its own right as it improves the information elicited from offenders, facilitates cognitive restructuring, challenges thinking, mind maps offenders' thought processes, and adds more meaning to the in-session discussion and interactions between CCOs and the offenders:

*"Yes, 100%, it's behaviour change in the sense ... I think a lot of these ... the people we work with have got, you know their core beliefs and their underlying reasons behind doing things, I think the PGIs they definitely target and work with them for them to understand the reasons behind it all. And work with them and assist them to alter how they think basically; around their offending or decisions that they make. And each PGI targets different things. And you can use them for different things; each PGI. So, they can understand themselves a bit better and why. Get them to stop and think about what they're actually doing." (I04)*

In addition, CCOs generally agreed that the main utility of the PGI is that it standardises and enhances service delivery, adds structure to supervision sessions, covers a larger breadth of issues, formalises behavioural intervention, and improves practice and consistency to what they have always been doing in community corrections, and thus, would be very helpful for the new officers. By extension, CCOs often implied that they previously delivered supervision content similar to that of the PGI, though in a less structured manner and less frequently prior to implementation of the PGI.

As the PGI provides a structured framework for supervision based on simple exercises and worksheets, it enables CCOs to continue to use their professional skills and judgement in a more focused, effective and structured manner. By standardising service delivery, the PGI has enabled continuity in offender rehabilitation by ensuring that offenders are supervised, rehabilitated and continue to be rehabilitated in a consistent manner regardless of the locations, offices, or officers they are with:

*"Basically everybody is different in how they might deliver the PGIs, but the message. You will read the aim and the rationale. So that remains the same. So regardless of what your interaction is with somebody it's ... your delivery might be different ... The person might be also in a different headspace from one year to—you know, when they reoffend again the next year or the year after or whatever. So I like the fact that you have that—you've got a guide. You've got a base, foundation. And then everybody works from there. However you deliver it, but the offender will hear basically the same [thing]." (I38)*

CCOs also referred to the flexibility of the PGI in that it enabled them to deploy targeted and individualised behaviour change interventions to offenders, and provide treatment to offenders who otherwise would not have received any treatment due to their ineligibility for other community-based services and programs. In this sense, the PGI was perceived as more holistic and addressing a wider range of offender needs:

*"Yeah, I think it does anyway. And for the ones that are not suitable for programs it helps to give them a bit of understanding and guidance on how they can address those issues or work through those issues." (I44)*

In addition, the CCOs noted that the PGI dovetailed with or paved the way for more intensive interventions aimed at changing offenders' attitudes and behaviours such as EQUIPS:



*“Yes, I guess to reinforce those principles that they’re learning, and help them continue that in their everyday life.” (I08)*

#### **4.5.2 Utility of the PGI in delivering the rehabilitation function**

As previously reported, CCOs generally saw themselves as “conductors” or agents of change. This finding was further reinforced by analysis of narratives pertaining to the impact of the PGI on delivery of the rehabilitation function of community supervision. CCOs discussed how implementation of the PGI has led to a shift in orientation towards having a stronger focus on behaviour change in supervision sessions. Some officers indicated that exposure to and prolonged use of the PGI has led to an improvement in their practice and assisted them in becoming more effective change agents:

*“Well it is—it’s more a conversation that you have that’s more therapeutic rather than you know, having all those, you know ... the one that is compliance based all the time. It’s the focus—obviously we are. But I really like the change agent part of the role which has a larger focus on now than it ever did before.” (I38)*

Notably, the manner in which CCOs approached the change agent part of their role appears to differ. This was evidenced by different streams of supervision activities that were highlighted as more important and primarily used to instil change.

Almost half of the CCOs (44%) highlighted that they rehabilitated offenders by identifying their needs and referring them to appropriate change-oriented services and programs, such as EQUIPS. These CCOs still used the PGI in their sessions with offenders, but the PGI appeared to be a secondary behaviour change tool to them. By implication, these CCOs appeared to adopt a program broker role:

*“So I think we’ve first got to identify those needs. So identify those needs, and that’s sort of those assessments that we do. I think you need to discuss with them what they want to achieve, and then, from there, it would maybe through referral to support agencies that are specific to those needs.” (I30)*

The remainder of the CCOs (56%) asserted that other than providing referrals, they made deliberate in-session efforts to be active agents of change, or that offender behaviour change was a direct, organic outcome they aimed to achieve within each supervision meeting specifically, and throughout the supervision period more generally. Some CCOs further noted that even if the rehabilitative work they did with the offenders did not result in any immediate behaviour change, their work would sow the seed of change:

*“Yeah, it could be that. It could be planting a seed. It might be some guys it might take them the third time to go around, you know. It’s like guys when they go to rehab, they mightn’t get it the first time, they may not get it the second time, but if you can plant the seed, just think, and stop before you act, stop. You know, that one thing, if you can plant that in their head, they’re in their [incident], okay, just for that one second. Okay, if they’re going to hesitate and they’re going to think about something before they go and punch someone or do something else.”(I46)*

The CCOs who took an active role as change agents also discussed how the PGI, as a helpful rehabilitative tool, had assisted them in delivering a range of supervision activities to effect offender behaviour change, including building rapport and relationships with offenders, collecting information and delivering behaviour change conversations.

##### **4.5.2.1 Rapport and relationship building**

While the suite of activities and mechanisms used by CCOs varied, there was agreement that effecting behaviour change should start by developing rapport and building high quality relationships with offenders. Officers discussed how rapport and relationship building is of “paramount” importance to the effectiveness of

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supervision sessions, and to effecting behaviour change. Once established, strong rapport and quality relationships help ease offenders into the meetings; increase their engagement incrementally in the process of change; make them feel cared for and see correctional officers as a positive source of support rather than simply an authoritarian figure.

However, building rapport and high-quality relationships with offenders can be challenging given their circumstances and issues with trust. Such relationships cannot grow out of pure control or one way conversations, but require time, genuine care, respect and two-way dialogues. In addition, this requires CCOs to show consistency in action, between what was said and what was done. Importantly, the CCOs discussed how the “PGI philosophy” encourages and provides them a reason to build rapport, and develop high quality relationships with the offenders as the enabling foundation based on which to achieve their supervision aims:

*“I think the PGI philosophy gives you a reason to build relationships. And they can be good instruments, right? Particularly, I think if you are having trouble with somebody, like someone for whatever reasons you are having trouble breaking through, or you are having trouble.”(140)*

Some of the CCOs expressed an awareness of the evidence-based best practice in community supervision they have learnt from the literature in that it is not only the supervision content or what is delivered in the supervision meetings that matters, but also the manner (process) in which this is done and the relationship they develop with the offenders. They also discussed how the PGI and its philosophy fit in with this:

*“And from what I’ve learned as well is that it’s not just what you’re delivering it’s how you deliver it and the relationship that you’ve got with that person. And that can be a motivating factor for them to turn up to supervision and it can also be a motivating factor for them to be fully engaged in a supervision process...So doing the mandatory PGIs and then getting to know the guys or females, getting to know the person as far as what their skillset is, so taking the strengths and skills for PGI, I think it’s 11.1. And that begins a different track of thinking as rather than okay, I’ve come here, this is compliance based.”(154)*

#### **4.5.2.2 Collecting information**

In addition to building rapport with offenders, the CCOs also collect information from them. While information gathering is often seen as closely related to compliance checking, it could be utilised as a channel to get to know more about the offenders’ life and experiences through which to develop a good understanding of their needs and the environment in which they live; and based on which to develop an appropriate plan to address their criminogenic needs and instil behaviour change. CCOs discussed how the PGI helped with this process. The introductory modules of the PGI were identified as especially useful in this respect:

*“Particularly module one, when they first come to us, it’s good to set the groundwork with them by using that, and then once you identify what the areas are that they need to address, you can pick the other modules too.” (108)*

#### **4.5.2.3 Delivering behaviour change conversations through PGI exercises**

Many of the CCOs highlighted their efforts to engage offenders in behaviour change conversations that were focused on offenders’ criminogenic needs. This could be done in the form of a general discussion or through using the PGI exercises. In particular, they mentioned how the PGI had become very helpful for this aspect of their work:

*“I do use PGIs a lot. Where possible I use PGI. I use PGIs not just for behaviour change, but for responsibility as well. That’s something that’s been really effective for me.” (111)*

In their opinion, delivering behaviour change conversations to offenders through PGI content is considered a core supervision activity that could directly lead to behaviour change. As part of their narratives about behaviour change, CCOs also discussed the techniques and mechanisms used to change offender behaviours, including motivational interviewing; demonstrating anti-criminal and prosocial modelling; and looking for teachable moments that they can use to help offenders change their behaviour:

*“What I’m trying to achieve is to help that person find a path to leading a—I don’t like the word—but a prosocial life, okay? So, from the moment I start talking to them, I’m looking for clues, opportunities that I can help them see what they can do for themselves to actually stop their reoffending and address the issues that cause that reoffending, and to move on and have a good life, yeah.” (140)*

A significant theme that emerged from the CCOs’ mechanism-of-change discourse was the idea of offender empowerment, which involves showing offenders how to become self-empowered as a means to correct their attitudes and change their antisocial behaviours. Together with this was the appropriate use of therapeutic jurisprudence via the enabling and respect of offender autonomy:

*“Okay, we’re trying to reduce recidivism and to bring about change in people’s lives to get them out of the cycle. To empower them to do that change, not for us to do it from [sic] them.” (140)*

In line with this, some CCOs discussed the importance of cognitive restructuring for offenders and how this helped offenders to gain insights into their behaviours so that they became aware of the factors that led them to offend, the effects of their offending on both themselves and society, and of what they need to change. Some CCOs referred to the need to mobilise offenders’ intrinsic motivations and values as part of the change process, and to encourage them to take ownership and responsibility of their life.

In addition, the CCOs noted the importance of helping offenders to regain their sense of self-efficacy, to have a sense of self-worth, and to learn practical skills that would enable them to function well in life. Such skills included the ability to make prosocial decisions, distinguish between right and wrong and resolve conflicts through effective communication. These skills enable offenders to lead a prosocial life and avoid relapsing and re-entering into the vicious circle of recidivism:

*“Okay. One of the big things that I’ve always focused on is communication. If a person doesn’t communicate and communicate effectively then them getting into a fight because they can’t just say, ‘Okay, mate, I respect your decision’ and be able to walk away, they end up back in front of the court. If they can’t communicate effectively within relationships, whether it be domestic relationships or families or other people, then that’s where we get to the stage of it’s a bit of biff or it’s a bit of intimidation or whatever.” (143)*

#### 4.6 Perceived functions of supervision and responses to the PGI

While on average CCOs made positive comments about the PGI and its impact on the roles and functions of their work, there is the potential that such views about the PGI may be moderated by individual perceptions about the core functions of community supervision. For example, officers may show greater resistance to the introduction of components of the PGI if they are relatively more oriented towards compliance or social work functions compared to a rehabilitation function. Variances in the perceived functions of supervision may similarly influence how officers identify with the agent of change role that is a central characteristic of the PGI.

To examine this possibility, the following section assesses how CCOs’ ratings of the functions of supervision correspond with their uptake or acceptance of various components of the PGI implementation, including ratings of their initial training in the model, their confidence in initially applying PGI content and their perceptions about the usefulness of the PGI worksheets. The relationship between the perceived functions of supervision and the discourse surrounding their identification as active agents of change or program brokers is

also examined. An understanding of these factors will provide insights into the uptake of components of the PGI implementation.

Interviewed CCOs gave high ratings of the usefulness of the PGI worksheets with a median rating of 4 (range = 1–5). In contrast, CCOs’ ratings of their confidence when first delivering PGI content had a median rating of 2 (range = 1–5). A relatively higher proportion of CCOs gave low ratings for confidence (51% with a rating of 2 or below) as opposed to those with high ratings (27% with a rating of 4 or above).

The CCOs who underwent PGI training at induction gave a median rating of 3 for PGI training (range = 1–5). Of these, 33% gave a rating of 4 or above while 48% gave a rating of 2 or below. As reported earlier, the split between officers adopting an active agent of change role versus a program broker role was 44% versus 56% (or 18/41 versus 23/41), respectively. These results are displayed in Figure 2.

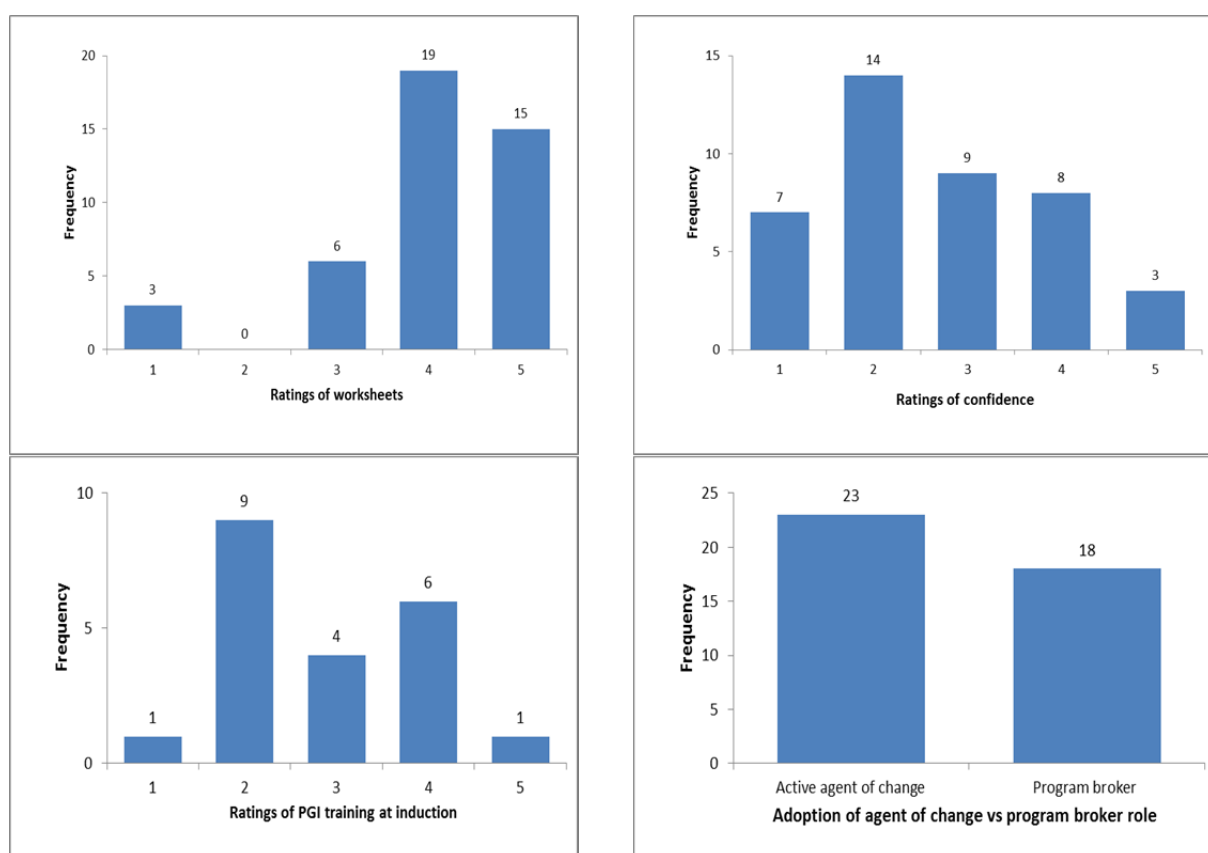


Figure 2. Distributions of CCOs’ ratings for various components of the PGI model.

To examine if variances in officer perceptions of the supervisory functions associates with their perceptions of different components, and therefore, their acceptance and uptake of the PGI, a series of Gamma/Somers’ D and Chi-square tests for nonparametric associations were conducted where appropriate. Results indicated that there were no statistically significant associations between CCOs’ perceptions of their supervisory functions and almost all of the PGI components examined (all p values > .05). There was however a negative, moderate association between CCOs’ perception of the rehabilitation function and their perception of the worksheets ( $\gamma = -.528$ , Somers’ D =  $-.337$ ) which was statistically significant ( $p = .024$ ). The results showed that CCOs’ perceptions of the core functions of community supervision did not appear to influence their confidence when first delivering the PGI, their perceptions of the PGI core training, or their propensity to develop an active agent of change role as opposed to a program broker role. However, while CCOs generally had a positive view

of the PGI worksheets, those with a higher rating of the rehabilitation function tended to see less value of the worksheets.

## 5 DISCUSSION

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This study examined CCOs' views of the aims, core functions and activities of community supervision in the context of the ongoing state-wide implementation of the PGI model. It also explored how CCOs' views of the functions of community supervision may have an impact on how they perceive and use the PGI as part of their practice. Key findings of the study are discussed in the following sections.

### 5.1 Consensus about the aims of community supervision

There has been an increasing consensus that reducing recidivism should be the core goal of community corrections and that doing so is contingent upon CCOs' perceiving "recidivism reduction as their responsibility and to engage in efforts to achieve this end. Unless this fundamental cognitive shift occurs, it is difficult to see how community corrections agencies will improve their crime-reduction performance" (Cullen, Jonson, & Mears, 2017, p.54).

Results of this study indicated that despite variance in the language and rhetoric used, there was a strong consensus among the CCOs that the overarching aims of community supervision are to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety. In delivering services, the community corrections sector has the interwoven missions of offering an effective alternative to imprisonment, acting as a substantial conduit for reducing recidivism and providing an avenue of minimal harm to offenders, their families and the community (Cullen et al., 2017). This study found that CCOs endorsed the overarching aims of supervision that align with these missions.

### 5.2 Rehabilitation and change agency as part of the professional identity

The literature has identified different types of officers who follow different approaches to community supervision, and who may value a particular core function of supervision more than others (Klockkars, 1972; Ohlin, Piven, & Pappenfort, 1956; Paparozzi & Gendreau, 2005; Skeem & Manchak, 2008). Given the historical reliance on detection, control and punishment in community corrections in previous decades, there is a risk that CCOs might prioritise a compliance-focused supervision orientation over the other roles and functions of community supervision (Cullen et al., 2017; Gleicher et al., 2013). Seminal research into the 'Black Box' of community supervision by Bonta et al. (2008) found that officers tended to overemphasise the importance of law enforcement or the compliance monitoring aspect of supervision to the potential detriment of promoting behaviour change, is evidence of this continued risk.

A significant finding of this study is that CCOs held positive views about rehabilitation and the importance of changing offenders' behaviours. These views about the importance of rehabilitation functions were consistent among CCOs with varying levels of experience and training, which suggests that such perceptions may have predated introduction of the PGI in addition to being promoted by the progressive rollout of the model. CCOs who had used the PGI for longer periods appeared to give marginally more positive ratings of the rehabilitation function of supervision. This may be indicative of responses to positive experiences in applying the PGI for behaviour change purposes. An alternative interpretation is that officers with a more rehabilitative orientation were more likely to employ the PGI during early discretionary phases of implementation.

While quantitative analyses may have been impacted by low variance and ceiling effects, qualitative outcomes further supported these perceptions and indicated that CCOs are more aware of the importance of rehabilitating offenders and their role as change agents in light of the implementation of the PGI model, given its emphasis on rehabilitation and promotion of CCOs as agents of change. Officers gave rich narratives about

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how rehabilitation was seen as a core part of a CCO's work; behaviour change was a possible outcome of supervision; their self-perception as "conductor" of change; their discourse of the organic link between rehabilitation and offender behaviour change; as well as the potential and experienced impact of the PGI on these factors.

Although there was general consensus among the CCOs about the value of the behaviour change function of community supervision, they appeared to endorse different suites of supervision activities and mechanisms to promote change. The first group primarily provided offenders with information and referrals to external interventions. While they noted that they still used the PGI within the sessions with offenders, the PGI was seen more as a secondary behaviour change tool to them. By extension, although aware of their change agent role and the importance of rehabilitation, these CCOs appeared to maintain a more traditional case manager role by acting as transitional mediums of change. They primarily encouraged and motivated offenders to participate in external services and programs.

In the context of ongoing implementation of the PGI it may not be surprising that many officers would continue to refer to primary avenues for directing behaviour change with offenders under their supervision prior to the PGI, which typically involved referral to structured offender treatment programs. However, the results illustrate that within a traditional community supervision model that has ostensibly been structured around RNR principles (e.g., prioritisation of supervision according to assessed risk; case management based on identified criminogenic needs), officers may nonetheless have difficulty self-identifying as agents of change and enacting in-session behaviour change interventions in the absence of a formal model that encourages such activities (see also Bonta et al., 2008).

The second group of CCOs indicated that they saw offender behaviour change as a function of both direct in-session interactions and external interventions, such as the EQUIPS suite of programs delivered by Corrective Services NSW. Consequently, they deliberately and flexibly exercised a broad suite of supervision activities to instil change. In addition to providing referrals to offenders, they endeavoured to build rapport and develop high quality dual-role relationships with the offenders, collect information from them to gain an understanding of offenders' criminogenic needs and responsivity, and most importantly, provide counselling and engage in discussions with offenders using the PGI exercises. These CCOs also mentioned how the PGI encouraged them, enriched their understanding and supported their exercise of each type of activity.

The CCOs' discourse about the different mechanisms used to effect change included empowerment of the offenders; cognitive restructuring; anti-criminal and prosocial modelling; holding reasonable respect for offender autonomy; mobilising their intrinsic motivations; building their skills and helping them to regain a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth. These mechanisms are well aligned with what has been described as core correctional practices—the principles of effective offender intervention embedded within the RNR model (Andrews & Dowden, 2006; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Effecting behaviour change is a complex process and this finding regarding officers' deliberate efforts to holistically utilise various supervision activities and mechanisms is a promising indication of positive offender behaviour change outcomes.

### **5.3 Balancing care and control**

An interesting implication of the pattern of results is that while rehabilitation was perceived as a critical function of community supervision, this did not occur in isolation from or opposition to other functions. The CCOs also acknowledged and expressed an appreciation of the compliance function of supervision. While the social work function was considered by many CCOs to be somewhat less relevant to their duties, they nonetheless recognised its importance in issues of offender stability and responsivity.

The CCOs' general discussion about their efforts to ensure that offenders comply with their legal orders, adopt prosocial change, and are supported with social work issues through external services indicates that the CCOs

endeavoured to approach supervision holistically. Further, their discourse about the importance of building high-quality relationships with offenders and effecting behaviour change based on respect for offender autonomy and empowerment indicates their awareness of the dual-role nature of their work, and the need to base offender behaviour change on the cornerstone of effective relationships (Taxman, 2002) and procedural justice (Skeem, Loudon, Polaschek, & Camp, 2007).

By extension, there is the implication that many CCOs have been able to adopt an increasingly rehabilitative orientation to supervision in the context of implementing the PGI model, without necessarily showing signs of increased permissiveness or transitioning to an ostensibly therapeutic role. Providing care and exercising control to ensure offender compliance appeared to be viewed as integral, intertwined components of their community supervision work. These findings support those of Howard, Tran, Thaler and Chong (2019) who found that offenders gave positive ratings of their dual-role relationships with NSW Community Corrections officers, as assessed by the Dual-Role Relationships Inventory – Revised (DRI-R: Skeem et al., 2007), as part of their delivery of the PGI on average. More broadly, a growing body of evidence indicates that modern correctional officers are generally synthetic, placing equal emphasis on both the caring and control aspects of their role (e.g., Ricks & Eno Loudon, 2014).

#### **5.4 Perceptions of community supervision and uptake of the PGI**

There were limited indications that CCOs' perceptions of the core functions of community supervision may influence their appetite for and uptake of service delivery models such as the PGI. The results showed that CCOs who gave higher ratings of the rehabilitation function of supervision also tended to give less positive ratings of formal PGI content in the form of worksheets. These officers may see rehabilitation and behaviour change more of a function of the dynamic dialogues, interactions and activities between offenders and officers, such as behaviour change conversations and cognitive behaviour intervention exercises, rather than that of the worksheets per se. There is an implication that officers' orientations and their supervision activities are an important moderator of program success over and above the content and tools of the program itself (Skeem & Manchak, 2008). This further suggests that many CCOs' endorsement of rehabilitative ideals may have been associated with perceptions of personal accountability for effecting offender outcomes as opposed to reflecting reliance on the particular tools or model they are tasked with implementing.

In general, the CCOs appeared to appreciate the PGI as a rehabilitation tool by itself and indicated that implementing the new model of community supervision has increased their self-perception as agents of change and emphasis on offender rehabilitation. Due to the absence of pre-PGI data, however, it is not possible to conclude that CCOs did not previously act as effective agents of change, or to determine if the movement towards becoming change agents occurred primarily as a function of the PGI being implemented.

#### **5.5 Limitations**

Data for the current study were collected as part of a series of process evaluation studies of the PGI and it is acknowledged that the current study has a number of limitations similar to those noted in the first report of the series (Thaler et al., 2019). Notably, the sampling method used in the study was proximate to a multistage cluster sampling method approach. While this can maximise the diversity of the CCOs included in the current study, it affects the representativeness of the study sample and thus the generalisability of results. Overall, the sampling approach was beneficial for the study's qualitative components, as it enabled the views of a diverse range of CCOs to be included and explored. However, the findings presented in the present study should be interpreted as being indicative of common narratives shared by a range of differing groups of CCOs rather than as representative of Community Corrections as a whole.

Additionally, as a result of various administrative factors, the interviews were conducted more than a year after the CCOs were introduced to the PGI model and several months after it had been mandated for routine

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use. This may have affected the CCOs' recollections and thus the accuracy of their responses, in particular to questions about their experiences during the early stages of the PGI implementation. Efforts were made by both the interviewees and the interviewer to ensure the accuracy of the details; however, it is possible that some of the CCOs' recollections contained inaccuracies.

Finally, findings of the present study are based on data collected midway through the implementation of the PGI and thus arguably represent post-intervention data. This makes it infeasible to make conclusions about the direction of correlations or the causal impact of the PGI on officer perceptions or behaviours. Future work should seek to incorporate both pre- and post-intervention data to enable more deliberate conclusions to be drawn that could assist NSW Community Corrections to understand more about staff performance and the effectiveness of any programs it implements.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The PGI was designed to promote supervising officers in the community as agents of change, increase the behaviour change content of supervision, and ultimately improve the effectiveness of supervision on reoffending outcomes. This effort aligns with the shifting ideology towards rehabilitation in offender intervention that can be observed worldwide and to actualise this sector of service delivery's assertion that "Community Corrections can make a positive difference to reduce the impact of crime and enhance community safety" (Corrective Services NSW, 2015, p.1). In order to understand the effectiveness of supervision programs, two foundational issues are to be considered: purpose and process of supervision (Taxman, 2002). This understanding is enhanced when viewed from a bottom-up approach, through the grass-roots perspectives of those who actually deliver the programs.

The results of this study show that in the context of NSW Community Corrections, CCOs have a strong view of the overarching aims of supervision in reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety. This was associated with widely held values towards the importance of rehabilitation or behaviour change functions of supervision, without necessarily neglecting important parallel functions relating to ensuring compliance to legal conditions and supporting social welfare concerns. As purposeful practices start with "having well-defined, specific goals" (Ericsson & Pool, 2016, p. 15), this suggests that the CCOs are well placed to facilitate aims of community supervision to achieve prosocial behaviour change among offenders and ensure community safety.

In this regard, however, it appears that many CCOs continue to transition between achieving the rehabilitation function of supervision through their in-session actions as agents of change, or as a more traditional broker for referral to other programs and services. It has recently been stated that the future of community corrections services is to some degree dependent on whether officers remain focused on traditional case manager role or are able to adopt and uphold a different professional role (Lovins, Cullen, Latessa & Jonson, 2018). As the orientation of offender management and intervention across jurisdictions moves towards rehabilitation, it may be instrumental to adopt both formal behaviour change – oriented models such as the PGI in addition to supporting communication and policy to encourage officers to collectively evolve out of the case manager (Bourgon, Gutierrez, Ashton, Bourgon, & Ashton, 2012) or "time server" role (upholding the rules to meet minimum job requirements until retirement) (Klockars, 1972) to become active agents of change.



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