

The Connections of Parole and Probation Agent Communication Patterns with Female Offenders' Job-Seeking Self-Efficacy

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Importance of Probation and Parole Officer Relationship to Female Offenders

- Probation and Parole agents constitute important members of offenders' social networks
 - Close relationships with agents have been shown to result in positive outcomes
- The agent's job is to use persuasion to get women to live within societal rules, and in this case to find and maintain employment
- The agent can use different communication styles with clients, and these styles can affect women's job seeking behaviors, including their self-efficacy to find work

Two types of communication styles:

- **Conversational Style** – encourages open communication on a variety of topics
- **Conformity Style** – reflects obedience to authority

Conversational style communication:

- ✓ Expresses understanding and shared feelings
- ✓ Takes the viewpoint of others and expressing empathy

Results of conformity style communication:

- ✓ Decreases client reactance
- ✓ Leads to higher job-seeking self-efficacy

Conformity style communication:

- ✗ Uses messages that include words such as “should,” “ought,” and “must”
- ✗ Includes controlling or domineering language

Results of conformity style communication:

- ✗ Increases client reactance
- ✗ Leads to lower job-seeking self-efficacy

Practical applications:

- A **conversational** communication style in which supervising probation and parole agents supply offenders with information, referrals, and support can increase offenders' self-efficacy to find employment
- A **conformity** community style using orders and threats can lower clients' self-efficacy to find employment