From the Inside to the Outs: Possible Selves and Transition Planning for Youth in Custody

by

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Transitions during adolescence can be difficult, but for youth in custody, transitions present a unique set of challenges (Collins, 2001), particularly when moving out of custody and into the community. Considerable research has been done on youth in custody, but few researchers have asked youth for their own thoughts about their future and return to the community. This qualitative study was conducted to explore the *possible selves* of seven youth in the Victoria Youth Custody Centre in Victoria, BC. Elicited through the Possible Selves Mapping Process (Marshall & Guenette, 2011) and semi-structured interviews, the youth described a number of hoped-for selves, including getting out of the system, not returning to jail, concern for their families, and educational and work aspirations. Feared selves included returning to custody, not being successful in life, and returning to their criminal ways. Participants also identified supports and barriers related to their release. Supports included professionals, programs, and establishing healthy relationships in their lives. Perceived barriers included drugs and alcohol, poor peer relations, and repercussions of their criminal lifestyle. The results have important implications for research, practice and policy regarding youth in custody.

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Acknowledgments

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Chapter I - Introduction

Across Canada, there were 34,434 cases with youth (defined in section 2 of the Youth Criminal Justice Act as between the ages of twelve and eighteen at the time of the offence) as the perpetrator found guilty (Statistics Canada, 2010). Of these cases, 5,307 (15%) youth were sent to custody and 1,304 (4%) were sentenced to deferred custody (similar to parole) and supervision (Statistics Canada, 2010). The remainder of these youth were found innocent, or were sentenced to a combination of community probation, community sentences, community service, or sent to various programs established for young offenders. These numbers are startling and disturbing. In addition to concerns regarding the youth themselves, this situation affects society as a whole.

Provincially, in 2009, there were on average 136.1 youth in custody in British Columbia (B.C.), 61.4 (45.1%) of whom were sentenced (Statistics Canada, 2010). The recidivism rate in B.C. for youth in custody centres is 76% (Statistics Canada, 2006). This very high recidivism rate indicates that more needs to be done to assist youth to assist them with navigating the corrections system, as well as transitioning back into the community. Despite mistakes incarcerated youth have made in the past, it is of great importance that every effort is made to assist them before release, and by doing so, decrease the chances of these mistakes being made again in the future. Snyder (2004) makes the following point:

> Youth returning to their homes after their commitment to a juvenile custody facility bring with them track records of failure....The simple truth is that the tangible and intangible costs to society of a youth's failure to thrive following release from juvenile custody are so high that society must learn to reduce the risk. (p. 54)

However, there is very little research on the development of release plans prior to release, or

assessment of the transition processes for these young people after their release (Nelson & Trone, 2001).

I have been fortunate enough to work as a youth support counsellor at Victoria Youth Custody Centre for the last three years. Early in my work at the centre, I was shocked to realize that the most common reason youth were experiencing stress was because they were nearing release. I had assumed that this would be a time full of positivity and excitement, but instead, the youth often would share that they did not want to leave the jail, and would promise to return soon. The youth also would affectionately refer to other staff and myself as family members (e.g., auntie or sister), and demonstrated no connection to the community outside of the custody centre. Over time, I continued to see youth coming to the centre and being released, only to return soon after (sometimes in the same day). Soon I began to meet the younger siblings of some of my older clients, and staff that had been at the centre for a longer period of time would sometimes recognize these youth because they had worked with their parents. While these realizations about what was happening in the custody centre developed, I also began to comprehend how little understanding people in the community have about the criminal justice system, and the youth I work with. The system these youth are trying to navigate is a difficult one, and one that I do not completely understand myself. Despite this, I am in a unique position because I work with youth at the centre, and I am a member of the community. Because of this I was able to do research asking the youth themselves about what they hoped-for and feared about their future, and what supports and barriers they identified for their release.

We need to know more about the hopes, fears, and goals these youth have in order to help them to develop effective release plans linked to realistic and achievable strategies and behaviours. Further to this, we need to have an understanding about what the reality of "life on

the outs" is for these youth, and their own interpretations of this. Professionals working with youth both in custody and upon release, would also benefit from a deeper understanding of challenges youth face in overcoming obstacles they identify in their own lives, recognizing their strengths (Nelson & Trone, 2001), and identifying their external support and resource needs. Of paramount importance, however, is to offer the youth an opportunity to examine their own future, which might facilitate hope, promote self-knowledge, and build contingency planning such that the youth feel more empowered and competent enough to face society again, this time as productive and healthy citizens.

Middle to late adolescence the time when youth develop a sense of identity (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Erikson, 1968; Harter, 1999; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; McAdams, 2001). Identity is a difficult concept to define, but is recognized as a major developmental task incorporating and expanding on all dimensions of self-knowledge and experienced as a sense of self related to school, work, (Havighurst, 1952), family, relationships (Levinson, 1978), values and morals (Broderick & Blewitt, 2010, p. 295). As such, identity serves as the substrate for behavioural, affective, and cognitive commitments to career, relationships, political, religious, and moral belief systems that will be consolidated on in adulthood (Broderick & Blewitt, 2006, p. 297). Erikson implied a future-oriented quality to his idea of identity; thus, past accomplishments are integrated with new directions (Erikson, 1968 cited in Broderick & Blewitt, 2000). This sense of identity begins to emerge in adolescence because of the onset of cognitive formal operations, physiological maturity, and socioemotional influence in conjunction with demands for establishing oneself in the world requiring autonomy, differentiation, and meaning making (Grotevant, 1993; Habermas & Black, 2000; McAdams, 2001). For an average adolescent, navigating adolescence and identity development can be very challenging. For youth

in custody, however, adolescence in general, and identity development more particularly, are likely to be even more difficult and poorer-functioning outcomes are more likely the norm than the exception. As a result, youth in Ministry care often require more support as they navigate through adolescence into adulthood (Collins, 2001). Collins argues that youth who live with their birth family typically utilize their family as a source of support and resources for the difficult years transitioning from youth to adulthood, and furthermore, that these years do not necessarily end at age 18. In contrast, for youth in care, the transition from adolescence to young or *emerging* (Arnett, 2000) adulthood is often more abrupt and low in or absent of support and resource sources.

From a *social constructivist* theoretical perspective, an individual's context and its influence on the development of future possibilities, is a key aspect in the development of self (Rosenberg, 1979). Within this framework, identity develops and is maintained within a particular social context and is always grounded in this contextualized social reality (Rosenberg, 1979; Wiley & Alexander, 1987). Seltzer (1982, cited in Broderick & Blewitt, 2009) offers a model of social identity known as *frameworklessness*. Seltzer suggests that there is a state of instability and anxiety unique to adolescence. This state of frameworklessness is the manifestation of multiple changes including for example, changes in physical development and appearance, the emergence of adult sexual needs, shifts in hormones, increased cognitive ability to reflect on the future and the self, and the increase in maturity (Seltzer, 1982, cited in Broderick & Blewitt, 2009). Furthermore, the sense of frameworklessness will increase in conjunction with any loss in feelings of security and structure (Seltzer, 1982, cited in Broderick & Blewitt, 2009). Important individuals in the adolescent's life are partners in the identity negotiation process, and provide feedback about the self's successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses – past,

current, and likely in the future (Kaplan, 1975, 1980; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). During adolescent development, youth seek more autonomy from their parents, but paradoxically become more dependent on their peers (Broderick & Blewitt, 2006, p. 315). Therefore, youths' peer groups become active partners in developing their identity. For example, if a youth utilizes a self in an interaction with an important individual and has an unappealing result (i.e., the important individual does not recognize or honour the "self" the youth presents), the youth may seek out alternative social contexts in which to present and define him/herself. Conversely, if the important people in the youth's life are supportive of the self the youth presents, then it is more likely this sense of self will be maintained. In order then to successfully negotiate this self-identity process, one must be cognitively able to link desired identities to realistic possibilities that exist in the social environment (Cantor, Mischel & Schwartz, 1982) and future. However, there is little research investigating the identity developing process among youth-at-risk in general or addressing what kind of policy (Collins, 2001) and rehabilitation practice changes need to be made to assist them. Apparently, even less research exists on the question of *how* youth in custody build and expand on – or modify - their contemporaneous identity status both in custody and in anticipation of release from custody.

While there has been considerable research on incarcerated individuals and youth transitioning out of custody (Abrams, Shannon, & Sangalang, 2007; Heflinger & Hoffman, 2008; Inderbitzin, 2009), from Maruna's (2001) perspective, any significant attempt to improve the juvenile justice system should focus squarely on helping young offenders make a successful transition back out into the community. At the time of release, most inmates have an initial strong desire to succeed (Petersilia, 2001). However, as Steinberg, Chung and Little (2004, as cited in Inderbitzin, 2009) point out:

> Despite its putatively rehabilitative aims, it is all too often the case that young offenders finish their time with the justice system and move into the adult world with just as many, if not more, problems than when they first entered. (p. 23)

Therefore, my research question was *What are the hopes and fears described by youth in custody as they near release?* That is, who did they think they would become and what type of lives did they think they would lead on "the outs?" I was also interested in learning what youth identified as supports and barriers in relation to their transition to the "outs" community.

My research adds to the knowledge base regarding identity development and transitions among youth in custody. This study addresses a gap in the research by explaining past, present, and future aspects of self for youth nearing release, as well as what they identify as needing in order to be successful. As such, this research may also be instructive to policy and practice. A qualitative methodology was required for this type of in-depth descriptive and narrative life-story data. Specifically, I utilized a task-based tool, the *Possible Selves Mapping Process*, within a semi-structured interview with individual volunteer participants at a youth custody centre.

Chapter II - Review of Selected Literature

This chapter offers a review of selected literature in a variety of areas relating to this research. It begins with a review of the social constructivist theory and identity development literatures. The concept of *possible selves* is also discussed, particularly with regard to utilizing this concept with "delinquent" (i.e. criminal behaviour, school truancy, being placed in an institution, etc.) youth. Finally, demographic information about youth in custody in British Columbia, is outlined.

Social Constructivist Theory and Identity Development

Social Constructivist theory challenges the concept that an objective external reality exists, or can be known apart from the way in which it is constructed and understood in the social context (Mahoney, 1995). Furthermore, Constructivists argue that there are multiple stories or versions of realities, and that the experience of the events is more important than the nature of the reality (Guidano, 1995). Knowledge, then, is constructed from language and words are what give meaning to the human experience and objective reality (Gergen, 1999). As Greene (1994) and Payne (1997) put it, knowledge is constructed by individuals in tandem with their social, political, and objective realities. The relationship between the individual and their environment is not seen as linear, or as a cause and effect dynamic. Instead, the relationship between an individual and his/her environment is complex and reciprocal, with the individual affecting the environment and vice versa. Individuals construct their own meaning based on their shared norms, values, and experiences (Furman, Jackson, Downey & Shears, 2003).

Transitions at any stage in life can be challenging, but the challenges faced by at-risk youth, such as youth as they transition out of custody and return to their community, are

particular (Collins, 2001). Despite this, little research has been done looking at how to best help individuals leave jail and smoothly re-enter the community (Nelson & Trone, 2001).

From a Constructivist viewpoint, identity is not a static or uni-dimensional part of the self (Blustein, D., Kenna, A., Murphy, K., Devoy, J., & DeWine, D., 2005). Instead, it is formed, created, and changed throughout a youth's development. It is imperative then to keep the context of the individual in mind when discussing the development of the individual. Thus, for the present study, it would be important to include the custody centre and its impact on the youth.

The social constructivist framework is appropriate because I am investigating the processes that occur as youth plan for their release in the context of the jail. Furthermore, a contextual understanding of this group is integral to the study as it would be impossible to talk about these youth transitioning out of jail without looking at the impact jail has had on these youth, and the impact it has had on their thoughts about transitioning out of jail.

Possible selves is a future-oriented and personalized form of self-concept, which provides a link between the self-concept and motivation (Markus & Nurius 1986). These selves represent individuals' ideas of what it is possible they might become, what they would ideally like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. Marcus and Nurius point out that possible selves "function as incentives for future behaviour…and provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self" (p. 954).

Possible selves include representations of the self from the past, as well as representations of the self in the future (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves are connected to, but still different from, the current self, because experiences of selves from the past will likely influence the current self, and therefore influence the future selves. While they are individualized and personal, possible selves are also greatly influenced by social comparisons, and by thoughts,

feelings, and behaviours relating to perceptions of others (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Moreover, although an individual can, in theory, choose from a variety of possible selves, the selves that most people identify are particular to their sociocultural and historical context, including the models, images, and symbols provided by the media (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Marcus and Nurius (1986) suggest three important functions of possible selves. First, possible selves can serve as a source of motivation and incentive for future behaviour, and can provide a means-end pattern for new behaviours. Secondly they can provide a more holistic context for the individual's current behaviour. Attributes, abilities and actions of the self are not evaluated in isolation but depend on the surrounding context of possibility. Finally, because possible selves are not well-anchored in social experience, they are comprised of self-knowledge that is vulnerable to changes in the environment. Therefore, as representations of potential, possible selves will be particularly sensitive to situations that communicate new or inconsistent information about the self. An example Markus and Nurius (1986) provide involves a student who sees himself or herself as intelligent, but receives a poor grade on an exam. This may not permanently challenge an individual's sense of self as "intelligent", but it will give substance to an alternative possible self, such as "drop out". This activation of an alternative possible self will influence the individual's current self-evaluation of intelligence.

The concept of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) is closely tied to Possible Selves. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as, "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p. 391). Furthermore, self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment. This is because unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire, they have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties

(Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy impacts: (a) the *choices* people make (e.g., people tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not); (b) how long they will *persevere* when confronting obstacles, and how *resilient* they will be in the face of adverse situations (e.g., the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience); and (c) *thought patterns and emotional reactions* (e.g., high self-efficacy helps create feelings of calm in approaching difficult tasks and activities) (Bandura, 1997). Therefore, an individual's thoughts and feelings about their past, present and future Possible Selves will be impacted by their self-efficacy beliefs, and will, in turn, influence which Possible Selves they identify and invest in.

Possible selves in delinquent youth. Oyserman and Markus (1990) studied 238 youth, aged 13 to 16, grouped into four sub-samples with respect to degree of delinquency: public school youth, community placed delinquent youth, group home youth, and training school youth (essentially "incarcerated youth"). While Oyserman and Markus did not offer a definition of "delinquent', the youth in the study were divided based on officially known levels of school truancy, levels of probation and supervision, and living at home arrangements. The youth were asked to list three hoped-for selves, three expected selves and three feared selves for the next year. Responses were coded into one of six categories for hoped-for and expected selves (*positive intrapersonal selves; positive interpersonal selves; jobs, school or school related extracurricular activities; material goods, and any negative selves*), and seven categories relating to feared-for selves (*negative intrapersonal selves, negative interpersonal selves, poverty, do poorly in school or extracurricular activities, crime, drugs, death*). In addition to the above possible selves questions, youth rated statements (e.g., "stand on my own feet" or "do

poorly in school") with respect to whether it "describes me now," "I think this will describe me in the future" or "I would like this to describe me."

Interestingly, when the expected selves were compared for each subsample of youth, there was considerable overlap. All four groups frequently identified "be happy" and "have friends." However, the group of youth who participated in the least amount of delinquent behaviour stated "to get along in school" was the most likely to occur. In contrast, "to get along in school" was only the third or fourth most frequent response by the two groups of youth who participated in the most delinquent behaviour. Indeed, with regards to achievement-related responses overall, there were differences between the answers given by youth who participated in delinquent behaviour and those who did not. Another example of this achievement-related difference relates to "having a job." This was the third or fourth most commonly identified possible self by the two sub-samples demonstrating the least amount of delinquent behaviour, while it was not even identified as a possibility for the two groups demonstrating the most delinquent behaviour. Across the four groups, as delinquency rates increased, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth expecting to get along in school, and increased rates in the percentage expecting to have cars or nice clothes. When looking at the subsample demonstrating the most delinquent behaviour across all four subsamples, youth identified "junkie," "depressed," "alone," "flunking out of school," "pusher," and "criminal," as expected selves. When examining hoped-for selves, "having a job" was the most common hoped-for possible self for all groups. "Getting along in school" was a frequently generated hoped-for self in all groups except the group that demonstrated the most delinquent behaviour. Of particular interest, it was found that the youth participating in the least delinquent behaviour had the most balance between positive and negative possible selves. The youth who demonstrated the most delinquent behaviour had

the least balanced possible selves. Oyserman and Markus (1990) identified possible selves as a tool that can be used in the goal setting process. They claimed that the possible self will have the maximal motivational effectiveness when it is offset by a countervailing possible self in the same domain. In other words, a feared possible self (e.g., "not having a job") will be most motivational when it is balanced with a positive, expected possible self that provides the information or ideas about how the individual might be able to avoid the feared self (e.g., "graduating from high school and being eligible for jobs").

With regards to youth who participate in delinquent behaviour, Oyserman and Markus (1990) speculate that such youth may seek alternative ways to define the self because they are unable to construct and maintain positive possible selves. Youth labelled as "delinquent" may see positive possible selves – such as finishing school, finding a job, and having a family –as unlikely, impossible or not desirable, even. Thus, delinquent selves may be seen as a way to define themselves as "adventurous," "tough," or "in control," as well as serve as a source of prestige among peers. This negative identity might be what the youth desires at that time.

Oyserman and Saltz (1993) explored the impact of impulsivity, possible selves, and social and communication skills on delinquent involvement in 230 inner-city high school and incarcerated boys (aged 13-17 years). To do this, the respondents were asked to offer three self-relevant expectancies and three self-relevant outcomes to be avoided in the next year. Five categories of expectations and fears were coded: achievement (school or job), interpersonal domains (e.g., having friends, get along with my siblings), crime (e.g., get in trouble with police, steal, sell drugs, get hurt or killed), personal traits or characteristics (e.g., be happy, try to do my best) and material goods (e.g., have right clothes).

It was found that youth from detention centres were more likely to have more negative and fewer positive possible selves, meaning that these youth were less likely to have balanced possible selves.

"Balance" in this case refers to the construction of both positive expectations and the negative possibilities to be avoided in the same domain. Oyserman and Saltz (1990) argue that a lack of balance may mean that youth are more likely to act without taking into account possible negative consequences of the self. This oversight then is likely to lead to confusion and bewilderment when attempts to attain a positive possible self results in unforeseen negative consequences for the self. An example offered in the article involves a young man breaking into the school to mark his initials on the walls. He may have thought this act would help him attain his "cool dude" possible self, without taking into account that this behaviour is illegal. By writing his initials on the walls he is providing officials with clues as to who to prosecute and this may then lead to unwanted and unexpected consequences.

After each expected self was generated, youths were asked if they had done anything in the past year to attain this self. After each feared self, they were asked if they had done anything in the last year to avoid this possible self. It was found that non-delinquent youth were more likely to report that they were attempting to attain expected selves and avoid feared selves when compared to the delinquent youth.

With respect to possible selves research with youth in custody centres, Hellenga (2004) used ethnographic methods to understand the process of identity negotiation for juvenile detainees in a county detention centre in the Midwestern United States. Participants were six male, first-time detainees, aged 12 to 16, their parents, and detention centre staff and administrators. Data were drawn from fourteen months of participant observation in the

detention centre, archival research, single interviews with several corrections officers and administrators, and repeated interviews with participating youth during and after their time in detention. Working within a narrative framework that incorporated theories of labelling, reflected appraisals and possible selves, the aim of the study was to illuminate how labels or appraisals of detainees are communicated, by professionals and the youth themselves, in the detention context. Particular attention was paid to how experiences in detention contribute to detainees' perceptions of themselves and their future opportunities. Detainee interviews and field observations revealed a highly restrictive, jail-atmosphere in which detainees' self-expression was severely curtailed. Hellenga stated that the setting appeared to be designed to "erase and replace" youth identities, shaping youth to be silent, polite, even obeisant toward adult authorities. Hellenga found that many of the youth felt their identity development was negatively impacted by the jail setting. The author concluded that the setting's extremely restrictive practices, and the role the detention setting offers to detainees, are ineffective at best and damaging at worst. At this critical time in their development, being in jail and the associated stigma is likely to do damage rather than promote resocialization and rehabilitation. As Steinberg, Chung, and Little (2004, as cited by Inderbitzin, 2009) argue, “At a time when adolescents require experiences that promote the development of responsible autonomy and competent interpersonal relationships, however, current methods of punishment, such as incarceration in a secure facility, all but preclude the facilitation of psychosocial development” (p.28).

Demographics of Youth in Custody

While the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003 has led to a decrease in the rate of youth who are charged with a crime and sentenced to a detention facility, there were

still 4,457 youth sentenced to custody in 2007/2008 (Kong, 2009). Of these, approximately 600 were sentenced to open custody (a lower level of security within the jail) and 700 youth were sentenced to secure custody (a higher level of security within the jail). Furthermore, approximately 21,200 youth were on probation in 2004-2005. On any given day in 2005, 800 youth were on remand awaiting sentencing in custody. Overall, the incarceration rate in 2005 was 8.3 per 10,000 youth (StatsCan, 2006).

In 2007, it is estimated that approximately 1,736 youth were incarcerated in BC (StatsCan, 2009). Of these, 1,293 youth were incarcerated on remand, 230 were sentenced to secure custody, and 213 to open custody (StatsCan, 2009).

While the adolescent years are difficult for many, youth who have committed criminal offences and who have been incarcerated experience particular challenges (Collins, 2001). Some understanding about the lives and experiences of these youth will help us understand what these challenges are as well as their thoughts about their pasts, their present situations, and their futures. The McCreary Centre produced a report called, "Time out II: A profile of BC youth in custody" (Murphy, Chittenden, & The McCreary Centre Society, 2005). The authors describe these youth and their lives both while in custody and out. In 2004, 137 youth (123 boys, 14 girls) aged between 14 and 19 from all three custody centres in B.C. (located specifically in Victoria, Burnaby, and Prince George), volunteered to answer a survey developed by researchers at the McCreary Centre. The survey was based on the Adolescent Health Survey (AHS), a study that examined the physical and emotional health of youth attending B.C. schools in 2000. Because some items are the same on both surveys, it is possible to compare the results from the youth in the community and the youth in custody. In the "Time out II" report, results are compared to the AHS from 2003.

The authors of "Time out II" report forty-seven percent of the custody centre sample identified as Aboriginal. Approximately 90% of youth in this sample were males, and 10% females. Only 18% of the youth interviewed were in jail for the first time, meaning 82% have been in custody before (which is slightly higher than the 2006-2007 StatsCan recidivism rate).

As well as identifying how many youth were in custody and participating in the survey, the researchers also asked more detailed questions regarding these youth and their situations. Of the youth surveyed 72% of youth reported being diagnosed at some point with a serious condition, including "anger problems," ADHD, addiction issues, learning disability, depression, FAS, bipolar, schizophrenia, panic disorders, and epilepsy. Many of these youth had received more than one diagnosis. More youth in custody reported having a physical disability or condition that limit their activities compared to youth in community. More youth in the sample had serious injuries than youth in the community sample.

Tragically, suicide is a common aspect of youth in custody's lives. Almost half of those interviewed reported having a family member who has attempted or committed suicide. In the last year, 21% of the youth had seriously thought of committing suicide, 18% had planned on how to kill themselves in the last year, 13% had attempted suicide in the last year, and 5% were treated by a doctor or nurse after their attempt. Finally, 21% of youth said they had attempted suicide, and their reported reasons were: anger, stress, loneliness or depression.

Sixty-four percent of the youth reported being abused. They were most likely to have been abused by a family member (their father, mother or a step-parent). They also reported being physically abused by an acquaintance or friend, by other residents at the custody centre, by a romantic partner, by another relative or by a foster or group home parent. Over half of youth reported witnessing violence in their home. Interestingly, the majority of youth were not

concerned with being abused upon release. This could be due to any number of variables including the possibility that some youth were not going to return to the place in which the abuse took place (e.g., may be going to foster care or a program), the increased presence of support the youth were going to receive upon release (e.g., now they may have Probation Officers, Intensive Support and Supervision Program workers), or the challenges youth had with planning or thinking about the future.

Not surprisingly, youth in the custody sample reported partaking in more risky behaviours than youth in the community sample. Youth in custody reported smoking cigarettes, marijuana, and using other illegal drugs more than youth in the community. Virtually all youth in custody reported trying alcohol. Furthermore, 84% of youth reported drinking in an average month, and 10% of them reported drinking every day. Almost all youth in custody reported being sexually active, and over half reported having six or more sexual partners. Fifty nine percent of youth reported using a condom in their last sexual interaction, and 13% were diagnosed with a sexually transmitted infection while in custody.

A very small number of youth reported living with two parents at the time. Most reported living in a one-parent household or with an unrelated adult. Youth in custody report scored lower on a measure of family-connectedness versus youth in the community. Interestingly, the majority of youth report feeling at least one parent cares about them a lot. Over half of youth interviewed report having family members who suffered from addictions or mental illness or had a criminal record. Many youth also report having lost family members to illness, accident, overdose, violence, or suicide.

Most of the youth in custody reported having unsettled lives, including about half who had moved three or more times in the last year, and three quarters of those interviewed reported

living in government care. Most youth in custody report living on the streets in the year before being incarcerated. Many of the participants reported running away or being kicked out of their home in the last year before coming to jail. Furthermore, half of the youth ran away from home in the year prior to being detained and half of youth in custody experienced homelessness prior to incarceration.

The majority of youth in custody reported being suspended or expelled from school. Also, youth in custody scored lower on a measure of school-connectedness versus youth in the community.

The Time Out II report offers broad insight into a group of youth from the three custody centres in British Columbia, and provides a perspective on their situations, both in custody and in their home communities. While this perspective is valuable, and more specific and involved perspective can also be useful. One such example of this perspective can be seen in Paul Vasey's work. Vasey is a reporter from Windsor Ontario, was struck by the high number of severe crimes involving youth reported in newspapers. To gain insight into the lives that these youth live and the choices that they make, Vasey approached a youth custody centre and was given permission to interview youth, staff, social workers, lawyers, probation officers, judges, and police officers (Vasey, 1995). Although not considered academic research, Vasey's interviews and writing provide insight into the lives of incarcerated youth and the professionals that work with them. Professionals identified certain factors working with these youth. Consistent with the McCreary Centre (2005) report, many youth had experienced severe abuse as children, often at a very young age. Some professionals interviewed also suggested that biological factors along with abuse and neglect, might lead to a serious lack of empathy and moral development (Vasey spoke about many of these youth being "moral flatliners"). Few of

the youth at the centre while Vasey was conducting his interviews had contact with their parents. All youth participants reported having negative experiences with school and authority figures. Because of the introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act, youth were given specific sentences, with the result that they were released even if the youth and their support team did not think they were ready. It was observed that this led to an increased chance of struggling upon re-entry to the community. And finally, while it appeared that many youth became initially involved with "the system" because of relatively minor crimes, many youth ended up with additional charges (such as probation breaches) and spending more time in custody, sometimes in higher security facilities. Vasey identified these concerns directly from youth and from those working with them. Combined, their views indicate that these youth have faced and do face different and multiple obstacles in contrast to the general population. Many spoke of the difficulties they face when they are "out" in the community and what they like or value about being in custody.

Release

Arnett (1998) identified three individualistic criteria that young Americans need to accomplish in order to transition to adulthood. These include: accepting responsibility for oneself, making independent decisions, and financial independence. Paradoxically, emerging adults leaving juvenile correctional facilities were often on an accelerated path to adulthood prior to their incarceration; being locked up then seemed to stunt further growth. There seems to be at least some truth prison culture's common notion that inmates age physically but do not get any older or more mature while serving their sentences (Irwin, 1970). Inderbitzin argues that this may be due to the fact that many youth in custody come from communities of violence and poverty, and because of this, they had to sacrifice their childhood and focus on survival (2009).

However, upon arriving to jail, this accelerated path to adulthood comes to a stop. Their daily routine is set for them, their decisions are made, and their necessities are provided. This, Inderbitzin believes, is what slows down, or stops their development and growth (2009).

Bortner & Williams (1997) offer six broad possible outcomes for juvenile offenders re-entering the community as adults upon release: (a) some "make good" (Maurna, 2001) and stop their criminal careers, building successful, conforming lives for themselves in their community; (b) some, according to Merton (1957), simply get by, surviving the best way they know through a combination of both legitimate and illegitimate means; (c) some continue criminal activity without getting caught – becoming the relatively rare but much admired criminal success story; (d) some are sent temporarily back to the juvenile system for violating parole, in which case they face the challenges of re-entering the community again in a relatively short time; (e) some will be arrested for new crimes and be sent to adult prisons or jails [and, according to Mears and Travis (2004), this is the case for up to one third of juvenile offenders]; (f) violent death at a young age is a distinct possibility for members of the population.

When youth return to their communities, they face a variety of challenges. Broadly speaking, they must decide if they will change their ways and avoid the criminal lifestyle, or return to crime, and hope to avoid custody again (Inderbitzin, 2009). As well as having these decisions to make, these youth must also navigate this decision even while struggling with issues such as drug abuse, mental health issues, a history of trauma and learning challenges (Inderbitzin, 2009). Most of these youth come from families where their family members may suffer from drug abuse, mental health issues, and past or present criminal involvement. Many will be returning to disorganized neighbourhoods, disproportionately influenced by the incarceration of young males much like themselves (Clear, Rose & Ryder, 2001). Within such

neighbourhoods, there is generally a lack of jobs that pay a living wage (Anderson, 1999). Youth leaving a corrections facility will face a particularly tough time in the labour market, due to lack of training opportunities and work experience, and stigmas associated with criminal records. Furthermore, youth who exit jail often lack pro-social friends and romantic relationships (Steinberg, Chung & Little, 2004, as cited in Inderbitzin, 2009). Instead, their best resources may be their criminal capital, including friends who may be willing to stake them and provide them with illegitimate opportunities (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998) until they can find their way to financially stable ground. Some youth also face the additional responsibility of being a parent (Arnett, 2004; Nurse, 2002; Sullivan, 2004). Finally, returning to the community can represent a threat to their physical safety (Bortner & Williams, 1997).

Arnett (2004) identified the distinguishing features of emerging adulthood as follows: (a) the age of identity explorations; the age of instability; (b) the most self-focused age of life; (c) the age of feeling in-between, neither adolescent nor adult; and (d) the age of possibilities, an age of high hopes and great expectations. In order to re-enter the community, Inderbitzin (2009) argues that emerging adults exiting custody in her study had to work to figure out who they were and who they wanted to become. While this could be true for any group of emerging adults, those who are exiting custody, must navigate this transition as well as the transition out of custody. Maruna (2001) explained the process of these transitions like this: "To successfully maintain this abstinence from crime, ex-offenders need to *make sense* of their lives. This sense-making commonly takes the form of a life story or self-narrative" (p.7).

Given the challenges youth who are exiting custody experience, it is surprising there is virtually no research focusing on release plans or transition processes for these young people (Nelson & Trone, 2001). Discussions prior to release generally involve the youth, their family

(often foster parents or group home parents), and professionals from both the community and the jail. In British Columbia, youth and the important individuals in their lives (parents, foster parents, probation officers, etc.) usually participate in *Integrated Case-Management Meetings* (ICMs), where the youth's progress in custody is discussed, as well as plans for their release. Because there are two different levels of security in the jail, secure and open custody units, some youth who have been sentenced to secure custody can be transferred to open custody when nearing their release date. Open custody units are more flexible and allow for greater freedom, in order to assist youth in becoming used to less structure and fewer rules. In some cases, *reintegration leaves* (RLs) are granted – this means a youth can leave the custody centre for short periods of time, to go on approved excursions to appropriate venues such as cultural events, health clinics, or work related training opportunities. RLs also allow youth to gradually re-enter the community. There are often supervision orders placed on the youth as part of their release conditions (i.e., curfews, mandated meetings with their Probation Officer, Intensive Support and Supervision Program orders). Although there are proactive steps taken to assist youth in their release and transition back to the community, these efforts are court- and jail directed. Despite the best efforts of individuals involved in these meetings, the voice of the youth oftentimes cannot be heard because of the many other requirements, orders, and protocols in place. From my experience at the custody centre, it is often difficult to meet the desires of the youth with the requirements of the court. These release plans are often long and detailed which make it hard for youth to participate in the release plan.

Florsheim, Behling, South, Fowles and DeWitt (2004) investigated program effectiveness for youth in American custody, and planning for the future. They examined the relationship between several youth corrections program outcomes and adult criminal outcomes, using

juvenile and adult court records to evaluate the effectiveness of programs provided to delinquent youth in state custody. The results painted a discouraging picture of the effectiveness of intervention efforts for delinquent youth. They found that time spent in juvenile detention facilities, work programs, and group-homes was associated with negative adult criminal outcomes. Of even more concern was that there were no links identified between time spent in youth corrections programs and positive outcomes.

As well as pre-existing supports, Nelson and Trone (2001) emphasize the importance of professionals knowing more about the hopes, fears, and goals adults in custody have in order to assist them to develop effective and helpful release plans linked to realistic and achievable behaviours. They reviewed pre-release programs focusing on facilitating successful transition outcomes for inmates. Pre-release programs reviewed included those aimed at inmates who were most likely to re-offend, inmates with mental health issues, and inmates who struggled with substance misuse. Once the hopes, fears and goals of the individuals have been identified, Nelson and Trone (2001) believe it is important to assist individuals in finding jobs, reconnecting with their family, staying healthy and away from drugs, assisting with any mental health needs, and modifying behaviours that might have assisted them in jail but may prove detrimental in the community. They also emphasized that programs must also be accessible to the people who are seeking the services. Finally, the importance of collaborating with other agencies, such as supportive housing, and connecting the custody-centre with services in the community, was stressed.

The McCreary centre provided another report in 2007 entitled, “Voices from the Inside” in which youth from all three provincial centres in British Columbia were asked about their experiences in custody and their thoughts about release (The McCreary Centre Society, 2007).

The data in "Voices from the Inside" were gathered from "Next Steps", an interactive workshop that allowed youth to respond to the findings of the McCreary's youth health research. These workshops were offered in all three of British Columbia's youth custody centres, (Prince George Youth Custody, Victoria Youth Custody Centre, and Burnaby Youth Custody Centre), and a total of 126 youth participated. Of particular interest to my proposed research, the residents were asked about what kind of programming could be most helpful to assist their transition back to the "outs". The most common challenge the youth identified in programming related to transition planning was lack of resources or staffing. For example, if there was not a staff person available to assist with a RL then the RL was cancelled. Furthermore, resources, such as funding, instructors, staff and volunteers, were often limited, and this therefore meant that programming was limited. Other challenges youth identified were programs being interrupted by professional visits, different/fewer programs for female residents, and programs (such as gym or life-skills) being discontinued because of residents misbehaving or damaging materials/equipment.

The youth participants had many suggestions for programs or activities. Examples included:

- More actual school credits being awarded for the work they do in the jail's school.
- Retain the independent life skills program.
- More physical activities and gym opportunities.
- Have youth choose the programs they participate in and help to plan their own activities.
- More public activities.
- Introduce "a studio class, so we can make music or have dance class." (p. 22)

The majority of these suggestions require more resources, which may be difficult

for the custody centre or the Ministry of Child and Family Development to generate.

The researchers from McCreary also asked the youth about their thoughts on returning to the community and staying out of custody. Interestingly, the authors note that this topic generated the least amount of discussion. Often, the youth who responded were simply focused on getting through and surviving day-to-day needs, rather than being focused on the future. This would suggest that because the youth are not thinking about the future, they are therefore not making plans or decisions about their release and reintegration into society. This is likely because these youth are focusing on day-to-day situations and survival, rather than reinventing themselves and future-building. Furthermore, many youth were not aware of services available to them in the community. Some observed that, regardless of what resources were available, in order to stay out of custody, they themselves needed to commit to changing and staying out of jail. One youth said, "It's up to us, we have got to want to change" (p. 22). Many of the youth interviewed stressed healthy interpersonal relationships would be important in assisting a healthy transition. They said that spending more time with positive people in their lives (i.e., parents, siblings, etc.) would be important and helpful for them. Youth stated that more work or volunteer opportunities would help ease their transition and allow them to avoid more trouble in the community.

When asked about release planning, one youth stated, "false preparation happens a lot, you forget what life is like on the outs" (p. 25). This may suggest that despite the best efforts of professionals within the custody centre, it is difficult to completely prepare a youth to return to the community due to the drastic differences between the jail and life on the "outs." They did however, have multiple ideas about how to prepare them for the transition to the community. These included:

- Have a good plan for what they are doing when out.
- "For long timers, have someone to sit down and help you plan for your release." (p. 25)
- "Be matched to someone who could help." (p. 25)
- "ISSP [Intensive Support and Supervision Program] is good but too hard to go from constant supervision to ISSP." (p.25)
- "If I had a job that would keep me busy and out of trouble." (p.25)
- "Bowron Place in PGYCS (Prince George Youth Custody Services) helps us to be independent." (p. 25)
- Re-integration into the community (long and short term), more re-integration leaves.

The most important insight in the Mcreary Centre's 2007 report that relates to my research is summarized perfectly in this statement made by a youth in custody: "people should actually listen to what we say and not presume they know what we want" (p. 25). This suggests that youth want to be a part of the release process and planning. They have considerable insights into their own situation and what they think they need to be successful. For this reason, I invited youth to offer their own expertise in planning for their release and future as part of my study.

The McCreary Centre's 2005 report "Time Out II" also offers insight into the world of a youth in custody (Murphy, Chittenden, & The McCreary Centre Society, 2005). Many of the youth report being discriminated against due to their criminal background. Despite the multiple challenges and struggles these youth face, many youth still hold out hope for their future. When asked where they saw themselves in 5 years, almost 75% of youth anticipated having a job, over half anticipated having a home of their own, almost half anticipated having a family, and many anticipated being in school. A few stated that they did not know where they would be. Conversely, relatively few (9%) anticipated continuing to break the law or being in prison, and

7% anticipated being dead. This is both interesting and encouraging as it is different from Oyserman and Markus' (1990) finding that few delinquent youth felt confident that they would have jobs or do well in school. While it is a testament to the youths' resilience and strength that they are able to maintain optimism and hope for their future, there has been little in-depth research examining these hopes and fears, as well as what the youth believe would increase the chances of success.

Despite all of the release preparations described earlier, my experience at the centre has shown me that many young people report high levels of anxiety regarding their release. Many youth tell me they would rather stay in custody where there is structure, safety, and no access to drugs or weapons, rather than return to their community where there is less support and stability, which is similar to what Vasey reported (1995). There are undoubtedly aspects of life that are easier and require less responsibility for in custody, (e.g., food and clothing are readily supplied, housing is taking care of) than when the youth is in the community. Bartollas, Miller and Dinitz (1976) support my experiences,

> During the final stage of institutionalization, these boys begin to demonstrate extreme anxiety about making it in the community. They know that a return to the old environment will be accompanied by the same temptations…. Moody, insecure but still determined, they make their way toward the day of release. (p.114)

As difficult as growing up in a juvenile correctional facility can be, many young people adapt to life in such institutions with impressive resilience (Inderbitzin, 2005). By examining fears and hopes using the Possible Selves Mapping Process, and creating a dialogue about feelings and concerns, we can learn more about the situations that these youth are experiencing and hopefully develop ways to address them. Furthermore, I propose that the Possible Selves

Mapping Process can help youth in their release preparation process by offering them a concrete and contained way to examine their release and future. This may then help youth identify issues that they feel would be helpful to address with their support team.

My research question therefore was as follows: *What are the hopes and fears described by youth in custody as they near release?* To identify these hopes and fears, I utilized an adapted version of the Possible Selves Mapping Process (Marshall & Guenette, 2008; 2011).

Chapter III - Methodology

In this chapter, I provide a brief outline of social constructionism as it pertains to the methodology of this study. I will also provide rationale for utilizing a semi-structured interview that incorporates the Possible Selves Mapping Process (Marshall & Guenette, 2011) and narrative elements. The recruitment of participants, as well as the data collection procedure are also explained. Finally, data presentation and researcher location are also discussed.

Qualitative Approach

A qualitative design is appropriate to generate the level of data detail and description (Creswell, 1998) necessary to answer the research question. Furthermore, Creswell, Hanson, Plano Clark, & Morale (2007) note that the type of research question asked by the researcher will help them choose from an "array of options for conducting qualitative research" (p. 236). Five types of questions are also provided: (1) chronological/story-orientated focused on experiences over time; (2) in-depth descriptive focused on understanding; (3) process questions focused on experiences and changes over time; (4) essence questions focused on one phenomena; and (5) community actions questions focused on changes in a community (p. 239). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) provide a clearly stated definition of qualitative research:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations ... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (pp. 4-5)

Furthermore, Creswell (2005) states that general questions, and using a small number of participants, characterize qualitative research. Mason (1997) contends that conducting qualitative

research requires one to be mindful of the variable contexts in which the research takes place. This latter point is particularly pertinent for my study, because the context in which my participants lived, jail, is integral to this study and I was examining how they felt about their release. The context cannot be extracted or ignored.

Rudestam and Nelson (1992) suggest that research should be planned in such a way that there is a fit between the focus of the research, the methodology, and the overarching theoretical framework. In the case of my study, a qualitative approach also fits well with the social constructivist theoretical orientation of the research.

Social Constructionism

Social Constructionism is a theoretical framework that comes under the broad umbrella of constructivism (Whiston & Rahadja, 2005). Social constructionism focuses on societal and cultural influences (Whiston & Rahadja, 2005) and turns on two assumptions: (a) knowledge is constructed between people through social interactions and relationships; and (b) identity is co-constructed and reconstructed through a relational frame (Blustein, et al., 2005). In addition, how we frame our view of reality is dependent on and influenced by language (Gergen, 1999). By adopting this framework, as a researcher, I embrace the idea that reality is a social and cultural construction, and that multiple truths exist, each depending on context, culture, history (Blustein, et al., 2005), and language (Gergen, 1999).

Within the qualitative paradigm, my more specific method for gathering data incorporates semi-structured interviewing with narrative elements, and the use of a task-based tool, the Possible Selves Mapping Process (PSMP; Marshall & Guenette, 2008; 2011) modified for this population (see description below). Consistent with social constructionism, narrative elements focus on the way people use language to make meaning of different experiences (Gergen, 1999).

Participants

In partnership with the Victoria Youth Custody Centre (VYCC or the "Centre"), youth aged 15 to 18 nearing release were recruited for the study. None of the participants have completed high school, and some of the youth were members of visible minorities. Because Victoria is a relatively small community, and the "community of crime" on Vancouver Island is quite small, I cannot provide any more details about the youth who participated. I have worked at the Centre for three years as a youth support counsellor, developing a strong rapport with both staff and youth. This relationship assisted me in being able to recruit youth, as well as create safety within the interview that allowed the youth to be more open and honest. Furthermore, having an intimate knowledge of the system allowed me to better understand and communicate with the participants. Conversely, it is possible that, because I work at the custody Centre, participants in my study may have experienced the need to answer questions in a way that would put them in a positive light, or to "front" (exaggerate their situation). To minimize this, I stressed that when I did this research, I was not working as their counsellor, I was working as a researcher.

To recruit the sample, I placed posters explaining my study and inviting participation around the living units. Interested youth were invited to put their name in a drop box I placed in the clinical area (this is a restricted area in which youth are not allowed unsupervised). However, when I actually put the posters up on the units, approximately ten youth directly approached me and asked to be in my study. At this point, I spoke with each interested youth to explain the study and the possible implications of participating, and then invited them to participate Out of the approximately ten youth who volunteered, two were being released too far into the future to be eligible for my study. Another was not sure he would be able to maintain

focus for the length of the two interviews. Eventually, I was able to recruit one girl and six boys (ages ranged between 15 to 17 years). It is possible that, due to the youths' circumstances, they may have become somewhat anxious during interviews. In order to assist the youth, a youth support worker was available to debrief with the youth. None of the youth asked to speak to the youth support counsellor after our interviews. These interviews usually took place within ten days of the second interview, in order to make sure the youth could check the summary before their release.

The University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board approved my research.

Interview

I chose to use a semi-structured interview incorporating the Possible Selves Mapping Process (PSMP) tool (Marshall & Guenette, 2011 – see below) and narrative elements in order to gain insight into the participant's psychosocial reality and identity development. Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggest that information about a group can be generated through the narratives of individuals. Narratives are not individual, but instead are embedded in social relationships and structures that "provide unique insights into the connections between individual life trajectories and collective forces" (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, p.3). Interviews can provide a way to "generate empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, p. 2). Because youth in custody have a very specific and particular set of experiences, I considered the PSMP tool to be potentially effective in gathering the information from this population. Because the PSMP is a structured, concrete exercise, I expected that it would provide these youth with the structure they needed so that I could gather the information I needed. My experience at the Centre has indicated that the youth often respond well to structured activities, and can sometimes make poor choices when given too

much freedom (i.e., they may share incriminating information during the interview). Furthermore, the PSMP tool also allows for some flexibility and creativity (e.g., the youth can use symbols rather than words), as well as being a tool that can be individualized for each youth.

In the present study I chose an interview format that had narrative elements, rather than a strictly narrative interview style, in order to increase the structure of the interview and to allow time for the PSMP. I wanted to use a narrative influence because as Arnett (2004) explains, "It is important to listen to how people describe and interpret their lives" (p. vii). The interview was influenced by what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe as characteristic of narrative research; specifically, the researcher emphasizing the importance of learning from participants in a setting and this learning occurring through stories told by individuals. Narrative approaches make something out of events in a personally and culturally coherent and plausible manner (Sandelowski, 1991). Narratives are not individual, but instead are embedded in social relationships and structures that "provide unique insights into the connections between individual life trajectories and collective forces" (Maynes, Pierce, & Laslett, 2008, p.3). In the present study, narrative influence was particularly evident when I asked the youth about the supports and barriers they perceived that would assist them in their release. For example, Mike shared some of his story when he discussed how breaching is a barrier for him because, in the past he had breached one of his conditions, and then decided that since he was going to jail, he "might as well" commit more crimes.

Research Tool: Possible Selves Mapping Process (PSMP)

Reissman (1993) suggests that using visual aids can facilitate an interview. I used an adapted version of the Possible Selves Mapping Process in conjunction with more open narrative aspects in order to assist the youth to tell their particular and unique stories and to provide some

concrete information regarding their hopes and fears related to release. The PSMS is a tool that allows a place for youth to identify hoped for and feared selves, and a place to write down ways to increase the chances of the hoped for selves becoming realities and decrease the chances of the feared selves becoming realities. The physical structure and make up of the PSMP can help the youth organize their thoughts, and contain the information.

I found that the PSMP tool was very well received by the youth. Initially, many were concerned about doing the maps "properly," but after explaining that there was no "correct" way to do the map, the participants embraced the process enthusiastically. As has been my experience with this population, the participants generally responded in a rather curt and short manner, without a lot of elaboration. Youth in custody often respond with as few words as possible, possibly to avoid incriminating themselves. Thus, having a specific and concrete exploration process to follow such as the PSMP appeared to be effective in eliciting their experiences.

The PSMP version I used involved 7 steps:

1. Developing a Brainstorming Map: encourages identification of multiple and diverse hoped-for, and feared selves.
2. Categorizing the Brainstorm Map for Hoped-for and Feared Selves: group and organize the various selves that "go together."
3. Debriefing the Brainstorming Map: Youth share their own reflections, questions, and thoughts about the map.
4. Choosing the Most Hoped-for or Feared, and Most Likely: provides opportunity for youth to contemplate their future more specifically.
5. Transfer Brainstorming Map information to the Possible Selves Map.
6. *Things you can do right now*: encourages youth to think about concrete and specific

ways to increase likelihood of attaining hoped-for selves and avoiding feared selves.

7. Overall impression and feedback: offers youth a chance to add any final thoughts or concerns about the process or their own reflections.

For the sake of clarity, I did not ask them about the hopes and fears they thought were the *least likely* to occur (i.e., Least Likely Selves), as the original PSMP suggests. Evidence from PSMP has show that the *lease likely* question rather abstract and confusing (Marshall & Guenette, 2011). I also changed the layout of the map. Finally, I asked a youth, J.D. to create a "tag" (graffiti image) saying "juvey edition" for the centre of the map. I thought this would make the map more appealing to these youth.

I found that the PSMP tool was very well received by the youth. Initially, many were concerned about doing the maps "properly," but after explaining that there was no "correct" way to do the map, the participants embraced the process enthusiastically. However, I was expecting that by incorporating the narrative elements in some of the questions I had for the youth, I would hear more of the youths' story. When I asked the youth these questions with regards to the supports and barriers they perceive, the youth answered in a short way and did not share much of their stories (e.g., "drugs"). I utilized probing questions (i.e. "have you had an unhealthy relationship with drugs in the past?") but the youth generally continued to respond in a short manner (i.e. "yup"). In hindsight, I believe this might be because adolescents (particularly boys) often speak in a short manner. Even more so, youth in custody often respond with as few words as possible, likely to avoid incriminating themselves. Furthermore, there may be cultural or ethnic factors that contributed to their short answers. Nonetheless, much information was gained from both interviews for each participant.

Procedure

The data-gathering interview took place over two sessions, each about thirty minutes in length; a third short ten-minute session was dedicated to ensuring I correctly understood the information participants gave me. Many of the youth in custody have attention challenges and therefore, dividing the work over two shorter (approximately forty-five minutes each) sessions assisted them in maintaining focus and interest. Furthermore, providing the youth a break in between sessions also allowed them time to think about what they said, and also, anything they would like to retract, expand on, or add. Generally, it appeared the youth managed to maintain focus well, and often they shared surprise when they learned that the interview had come to an end. I also held both interviews within five days to keep the youth engaged and to try and limit the amount of information that may be forgotten between sessions. None of the participating youth chose to not complete the interviews.

In Session One, I went over the consent form, ensured the youth understood the purpose of the study, and described a basic outline of what the interviews would look like. I emphasized that the sessions would be audio-recorded, and that the focus of our conversation would be their upcoming release. During the informed consenting process I emphasized the issue of confidentiality, and the steps I would take to protect their identity (i.e., having them pick a pseudonym, not including any identifying information in my final thesis), as well as the limits to anonymity and confidentiality. Once the outline of the study was provided, I asked the youth to define what they consider to be a "successful release and transition into the community." This was because some youth may not plan on, or hope for, a legitimate or pro-social lifestyle on the "outs." Being clear on what they consider to be a "successful release and transition into the community" ensured that I understood the hopes and fears the youth identified, and the context

in which they saw their hopes and fears. I was surprised that all but one youth explicitly stated that they wanted to stop their criminal lifestyle, and did not want to return to jail. The one youth who did suggest that he might not be ready to stop committing crimes still added that he hoped to stay out of custody for at least one month. The youth were then asked to generate the PSMP brainstorming map. I asked the youth to think of all the future selves they hoped-for, and feared. After this exercise, I quickly debriefed with the youth to ensure they were comfortable ending there. As mentioned before, no youth requested a meeting with the youth support counsellor.

In Session Two, I again went over the consent form, and ensured that there were no questions or concerns from the last session. I reminded the youth of their definition of "successful release and reintegration into the community" they provided me with in Session One. I then asked the youth to think about which self they most hoped-for, the self they most feared, the self they thought was most likely to happen, and the self they thought was least likely to happen. I utilized probes and encouragers, such as "can you tell me more about that?" and "that's very cool" to co-construct the maps with the youth. They then transferred this information to the Possible Selves Map. Once the possible-selves information had been transferred to the map and participants were satisfied with their individual map, I asked them what they thought they could use in order to make their release more successful. For example, I asked what kind of support or resources they saw for themselves upon their release, what kind of support or resources they thought they would need or wished for upon their release but which may not be in place at the time of our conversation, and what kind of barriers might impede them from achieving a their definition of a successful release.

Within two weeks of the first two sessions, I met with six of the seven participants and ensured that I accurately understood what the youth shared with me. I brought a one-page

summary of the interview (described below) to the youth after both interviews have been completed. I asked the youth to read the summary (or read the summary to the youth), and asked them to add any comments or corrections they would like to clarify. After these changes have been made, they were asked to initial the document to demonstrate that I properly understood the interview and the message the youth were trying to share. As I mentioned, I was unable to secure all seven of the summary documents, the seventh youth did not return the summary with his corrections or initials back to me. Mike was released before I had a chance to recollect the summary from him.

I audiotaped the interviews, collected both the Brainstorming and the Possible Selves Maps, and took my own field notes in order to gather as much information as possible. Furthermore, I offered the youths copies of their maps if they are interested but only one took a copy of their maps.

Data Analysis and Presentation

My analysis process involved the brainstorming map; Possible Selves Map; the transcriptions, coding, and identifying of themes in the audio-recorded interview; and my own interview notes, memo writing, and observations; and developing a written narrative.

Post interviews, the process of analysis included the following steps:

1. Listening to audio interviews and recording holistic impressions.
2. Transcribing audio-recorded interviews as close to verbatim as possible (a professional agency transcribed the interviews for me, but I checked the transcriptions over to ensure they matched the audio file).
3. Creating a summary of each interview.

4. Within-participant analysis - identifying and highlighting core information for each participant related to the research question.

5. Writing a narrative based on the core information for each participant.

6. Across-participant analysis - rereading all transcripts and identifying broad themes and labelling text segments with code words or phrases.

7. Examining codes for overlap and redundancy and then revising to final list of codes.

8. Identified main themes across all participants and more specific sub-themes along with supporting participant quotes.

9. Creating an across participant table of themes and sub-themes.

10. Integrating and linking findings to the literature.

For my interview analysis, I primarily followed the procedure Braun and Clarke describe in their 2006 article. Their article outlines the use of thematic analysis in psychology. They argue that thematic analysis is a method that is essentially independent of theory and epistemology and can be applied across a range of approaches. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. An important early phase of analysis takes place during the transcription process (Kvale, 1996). Ideally, I would have transcribed the interviews myself. However, because of time limitations, I hired a professional to transcribe the interviews. Because of this, I familiarized myself with the data by checking the transcripts against the original audio recordings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further to this, Lapadat and Lindsay explain that the research interview is understood as socially constructed, and therefore, the transcript should be open to multiple alternative readings, as well as reinterpreting with every fresh reading (1998). I followed the suggestion of Braun and Clarke and partook in “repeated reading”, and read the data in an active way, searching for meanings,

patterns and so on (2006). I created a one-page summary of each interview. These summaries were shown to the participants to ensure that I properly understood and captured the messages the youth shared.

As the first step of my within-participant analysis, I surveyed the transcripts for textual descriptions of each of the participants' experiences. Because of my prior experience working with these youth, much of their stories were not surprising to me. Some of the information that the youth shared was unexpected however, and I made sure to note this in my research journal. This stage of analysis involved reading and rereading the transcripts in order to identify the core information from each transcript. I knew what information was considered "core" because it was "relevant discourse from each participant's transcribed interview" (Walker, Cooke, & McAllister, 2008, p. 85). This led to the initial list of ideas about what the data were and what was interesting about them, and codes were then produced. Codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting and refers only "to the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 63). Coding is part of the analysis as it is the first step in organizing data into meaningful groups (Tuckett, 2005). I worked systematically through the entire data set, and gave full and equal attention to each data item and identified interesting aspects in the data items that were the basis of repeated patterns (themes across the data set). I used color-coding and notes in the margins to identify codes. I coded as many potential themes as possible and coded extracts of data inclusively (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

After identifying codes, I looked for overlap and redundancy, placed the data into themes and sub-themes (Creswell, 2008). Essentially, I started to analyze the codes and consider how different codes may combine into overarching themes. This led to some codes becoming themes,

sub-themes, or part of an "other" category. It was important to think about the relationship between the codes, between the sub-themes and between the themes.

At this point, I reviewed and refined the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are two stages of reviewing and refining themes. In the first stage, I reviewed the coded data extracts, and read all the collated extracts for each theme and considered whether they appeared to form a coherent pattern. If the candidate themes did appear to form a coherent pattern, I then moved onto the second stages within this phase: I considered the validity of the individual themes in relation to the data set, but also whether my candidate themes "accurately" reflected the meanings evident in the data set as a whole. I also reread the transcripts again to ensure that the themes "worked" in relation to the whole interview, and also to see if there were any further codes that could be identified and themed. Re-coding occurred throughout this time, as coding is an ongoing organic process (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke then suggest defining and naming the themes as the next stage in analysis (2006). I identified the "essence" of what each theme was about and determined what aspect of the data each theme captured. Furthermore, and to ensure little overlap between themes, I considered how each theme fit into the broader overall story that I tell with my data in relation to the research question. By the end of this process, I was able to clearly define what my themes were. I also finalized the naming of my themes and sub-themes.

The final step in Braun and Clarke's analysis process is to write the findings. I created a table that represents the across-participant themes and sub-themes, pertaining to hoped-for selves and feared selves (Table 2). I also created a separate table with the supports and barriers that the youth offered. I used participants' direct quotes to "capture the voice" of the participants

(Creswell, 2008). Each theme and sub-theme was discussed and linked to findings in the literature.

In summary, the qualitative across-participant data analysis included both descriptions of the stories and themes that emerged across participants. Interpretations of findings included a description of each participant's story (the within-participant analysis) described below.

Because I tried to give a voice to a population that is rarely heard (Lane, Lanza-Kaduce, Frazier, & Bishop, 2002), I used a technique termed "ghostwriting" (Rhodes, 2000) to present the narrative profiles of the participants. Essentially, the term "ghostwriting" is used to refer to a practice where a researcher engages with a research participant and, as a result, creates a new "distilled" version of the text that both tells a participant's story, and acknowledges the involvement of the researcher. I believe this analytic procedure is most effective and useful because it acknowledges and honours the relationship that exists between the participant and the researcher. In the case of my research, this relationship is extremely important because of trust issues with these youth in the custody centre. Knowing the system, the jail, the staff, and the youth at the centre as well as I do, serves to enhance the quality of the data I gathered.

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) argue that thinking about the stories within the data enables the researcher to think creatively about the type of collected data and how to interpret them. Sequence may be missing or not logically developed when individuals tell a story, and by re-storying, I was able to provide causal links among the core information (Ollenrenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Ollenrenshaw and Creswell state that "a story in narrative research is a ... telling or retelling of events related to the personal or social experiences of an individual" (p. 332). I used the core information to create a story for each participant.

I then followed Rhodes' (2000) strategy and recreated the conversation in my mind. I began this process immediately following the interview and started by writing the participant's story in an autobiographical format. I eventually also utilized and incorporated the brainstorming map, the Possible Selves Map, the audio-taped interview and the written transcript in order to add further dimension and layers to the story. This process helped to reduce the complexity of the conversation to the mental framework and allowed me to better understand and summarize the youth's story. The stories were written in a first person narrative. In effect, the story was "re-genred" from that of an interview conversation to that of a conventional written narrative that proceeds through time in a linear way.

Data Credibility

Qualitative research can be defined as "a particular tradition in social science that fundamentally depends on watching people in their own territory and interacting with them in their own language, on their own terms" (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p. 9). Krefting (1990) suggests that qualitative research cannot be assessed using the same terms and concepts as quantitative research. For example, the ideas of *reliability* and *validity* do not fit the details of qualitative research. Agar, suggested that terms such as *credibility, accuracy of representation,* and *authority of the writer* would be better tools and language to reflect the qualitative view (1986).

Guba proposed a model for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative data (1981, as cited in Krefting, 1990). It is based on the identification of four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative studies: (a) truth value, (b) applicability, (c) consistency, and (d) neutrality.

Truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of people's experiences as they are lived and perceived by the participants. Truth value is subject-oriented and is not defined a priori by

the researcher (Sandelowski, 1986). *Credibility* can be a term used for truth value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Rather than assuming that there is a single tangible reality, as internal validity does, the idea that there are multiple realities would mean that it is then the researcher's job to represent those realities revealed by the participant as adequately as possible. In other words, a qualitative study is credible when it presents such accurate descriptions or interpretations of human experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognize the descriptions (Sandelowsky, 1986). It can be argued that truth value is the most important criterion for the assessment of qualitative research.

In order to acquire credibility, the researcher must be adequately submerged in the research setting to enable recurrent patterns to be identified and verified. Therefore, it is an important strategy to spend an extended period of time with the participants, so that the researcher is able to check perspectives and allow the participant to become accustomed to the researcher. Because I am fortunate enough to work at the custody centre, the youth have experienced my presence around the jail, and therefore, I believe I achieved the standard of *prolonged engagement* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). At the same time however, researchers must ensure that extreme over-involvement does not occur, and to do this, a strategy called *reflexive analysis* can be used (Good, Herrera, Good, & Cooper, 1985, as cited in Krefting, 1990). Reflexivity refers to the assessment of the influence of the investigator's own background, perceptions, and interests on the qualitative research process (Ruby, 1980, as cited in Krefting, 1990). The qualitative approach is reflexive in that the researcher is part of the research, not separate from it and the researcher must then analyze himself or herself in the context of the research (Aamodt, 1982). Journaling is a tool used to assist with reflexivity. Gall, Gall and Borg (2005) describe reflexivity as "the researcher's analysis of their own role as constructors and interpreters of the

social reality being studied" (p. 314). Reflexive journaling has been one of the most described and often used techniques (Janesick, 2004). By keeping a journal throughout the process, I was able to foster my ability to be self-critical and seek integrity at each stage of the inquiry (Whittemore, Chase & Mandle, 2001). Janesick (2007) recommends using the journal process as a way to reflect upon the methods of the study, including how and when certain techniques are used in the study. Furthermore, journaling can be used to track the thinking processes of the researcher and participants in a study (Janesick, 2007). Furthermore, *triangulation* can enhance credibility because it is based on the idea of convergence of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data to ensure that all aspects of a phenomenon have been investigated (Knafl & Breitmayer, 1989). For this research, I utilized two types of triangulation. The first was *triangulation of data methods* in which data collected by various means are compared. In this study, I utilized the interview data, the brainstorming map, and the Possible Selves map, to gain the greatest insight from the interviews. *Triangulation of investigators* occurs in a study in which a research team, rather than a single researcher is used. I was fortunate enough to be a member of Dr. Anne Marshall's research team, and at regular meetings I would share progress, setbacks, and thoughts I was experiencing throughout the research process. This also assisted me by providing peer examination, another technique to increase credibility. Peer examination involves the researcher's discussing the research process and findings with impartial colleagues who have experience with qualitative methods. For example, I showed the themes that were identified, and the supporting quotes, to my research team colleagues. They provided feedback as to whether the themes made sense to them, and at times offered a different interpretation of the data. Furthermore, my committee has been helpful in checking the work that I have done and offering insights or feedback. I also utilized member checking, a technique that consists of continually

testing with informants the researcher's data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During the interview, I paraphrased the statements the youth made carefully, and asked them to confirm that I correctly understood them. I also met with the youth within ten days of the first two interviews and created a two-page summary of the interview to ensure that I correctly understood what they told me. Finally, I also believe I met the criteria for being an authority as a researcher. To strengthen the idea of authority, viewing the researcher as a measurement tool has been proposed (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Four characteristics that are necessary to assess the trustworthiness of the human instrument include: (a) the degree of familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study; (b) a strong interest in conceptual or theoretical knowledge and the ability to conceptualize large amounts of qualitative data; (c) the ability to take a multidisciplinary approach, that is, to look at the subject under investigation from a number of different theoretical perspectives; and (d) good investigative skills, which are developed through literature reviews, course work, and experience in qualitative research methods. I have a high level of familiarity with the custody centre, the "system", and with the residents. I also spent considerable time exploring different concepts and theories, such as the Possible Selves Mapping Process and thematic analysis, that assisted with the collection and understanding of the data. I used a variety of theoretical perspectives, particularly social constructivism, in order to examine what the youth were sharing with me. Finally, by reviewing the previous research and participating in other qualitative research as a research assistant, I added to the trustworthiness of myself as the instrument.

Applicability refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups; it is the ability to generalize from the findings to larger populations. There are two perspectives with regards to applicability with qualitative research.

The first is that the ability to generalize is not relevant in many qualitative research projects. A strength of the qualitative method is that it is conducted in naturalistic settings with few controlled variables. Each situation is defined as unique and thus is less amenable to generalization. Therefore, applicability is not seen as relevant to qualitative research because its purpose is to describe a particular phenomenon or experience, not to generalize to others. The other perspective on applicability in qualitative research is the concept of *fittingness* or *transferability* as the criterion against which applicability of qualitative data is assessed (Guba, 1981, as cited in Kefting, 1990). When the findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity or goodness of the fit between the two contexts, the research meets the criterion for *fittingness* or *transferability*. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that transferability is more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation or population, than that of the researcher of the original study. Furthermore, they argue that if the original researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, he or she has addressed the problem of applicability.

I am not very concerned with transferability in my study. However, I did attempt to establish as much of an understanding of the demographics of youth in custody, as well as the findings from other research utilizing similar concepts or participants. Because of this, I am able to compare my findings with those in other studies. I also tried to learn as much background information as would be appropriate about the participants in order to provide an adequate database to allow transferability judgments to be made by others. For example, I was interested in learning about the "home life" described by other incarcerated youth in previous research. This provided insight into possible environments and situations the youth in this study would be returning to.

Another criterion of trustworthiness considers the consistency of the data. Consistency refers to whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. However, qualitative field settings are rarely controlled, but instead can be complicated by many unexpected variables. Qualitative work strives to learn from participants rather than control for them. It emphasizes the uniqueness of the human situation, so that variations in experience rather than identical repetition is sought (Field & Morse, 1985, as cited in Krefting, 1990). Therefore, variability is expected in qualitative research and consistency is defined in terms of *dependability*. The concept of dependability implies trackable variability is variability that can be ascribed to identified sources (Guba, 1981, as cited in Krefting, 1990). The researcher is looking for a range of experiences, rather than the average experience.

In order to increase dependability in my study, I worked to make my research auditable (Guba, 1981, as cited in Krefting, 1990). This means that I provided as much information as I could regarding methodology, recruitment, and procedure so that another researcher could clearly follow the decision trail I used. Also, I utilized the code-recode procedure in which I coded a segment of data, and then waited two weeks to recode the same data and compare the results (Krefting, 1990). Finally, my committee and research team members assisted me through triangulation by checking my proposed plan of action, and offering feedback about possible strengths and weaknesses.

Neutrality is the fourth criterion of trustworthiness, and refers to neutrality and freedom from bias in the research procedures and researcher (Sandelowski, 1986). It refers to the degree to which the findings are a function solely of the information and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations, and perspectives (Guba, 1981, as cited in Krefting, 1990). In

quantitative research, objectivity is the criterion of neutrality and is achieved through rigor of methodology and keeping proper distance between the researcher and the subjects. However, qualitative researchers try to increase the worth of the findings by decreasing the distance between the researcher and the participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that rather than focusing on the neutrality of the researcher, the focus should be put on the neutrality of the data. They suggest that *confirmability* be the criterion of neutrality. This is achieved when truth value and applicability are established.

In order to establish confirmability, auditability must be reached, meaning an external auditor must be able to follow the natural history and progression of events within the project to try and understand how decisions were made. There are six categories of records that can be included in the audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985): (a) raw data (field notes, video, and audio recordings); (b) data reduction and analysis products (quantitative summaries, condensed notes, working hypotheses); (c) data reconstruction and synthesis products (thematic categories, interpretations, inferences); (d) process notes (procedures and design strategies, trustworthiness notes); (e) materials related to intentions and dispositions (study proposal, field journal); and (f) instrument development information (pilot forms, survey format, schedules). I have field notes and audio recordings and transcripts available. I also created summaries of the interviews, and a chart of the thematic categories I established. I also have a field journal and notes that I made throughout the research process. The journaling process allowed me an opportunity to practice reflexivity. I focused particularly on not making any decisions that were based on assumptions and on not leading the youth in their answers. I took the time to reflect before and after each interview about the process and my impressions and concerns. To establish neutrality, I focused on the respondents and their stories, rather than having the study shaped by my own researcher

bias. I did a pilot study prior to collecting research and made notes regarding how the interview went and ways to enhance the process. Finally, the use of the research team again assisted me in increasing confirmability by encouraging me to stay aware of my influence on the data. I was able to check the findings with my colleagues to ensure that I was not being influenced by any bias or preconceptions I may have had.

Table 1 outlines a summary of the criteria, their common quantitative definitions and Guba's qualitative definitions.

Table 1

Comparisons of Criteria by Research Approach.

Criterion	Qualitative Approach	Quantitative Approach
Truth Value	Credibility	Internal Validity
Applicability	Transferability	External Validity
Consistency	Dependability	Reliability
Neutrality	Confirmability	Objectivity

Source: Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Krefting, 1990

Researcher Location

As a graduate student, I recognize the importance of developing an analysis strategy that is useful as well as able to understand and assist in co-constructing the stories of the youth. That being said, I also recognize the importance of acknowledging the unique situation I am in, because I am both a student-researcher and a youth support worker at the custody centre. I approached this research as someone who was interested in learning about these youth's perceptions about their future, and as someone who has worked at this facility, with these youth, for three years. It was important then that I acknowledged that while I was doing this work as a

student-researcher, many of the youth and staff know me as a student-counsellor. In other words, I was in a student-researcher role, in an environment in which I am normally a student-counsellor. As mentioned before, this can be a benefit in that it provides me with insider knowledge, and some relationship with the youth, but also can be a challenge in that I was attempting to balance multiple roles. In order to address this, I took the time prior to each interview to prepare to engage with these youth as a researcher, and not as a counsellor. I would focus on the information I hoped to obtain and plan for any possible challenges I might face. Furthermore, I explained to youth that this project is associated with the schooling I do (the youth I work with know that I am in school) and was different from the Youth Support Worker role that I have at the jail. I asked if they understood this, and if they believed it would change the way they talked with me in this study. None of the youth voiced any concerns.

Chapter IV – Participants Stories

This chapter presents the results of the within-participant analysis. First I will introduce the seven young people who shared their hopes and fears with me, and outline the results of the Possible Selves Mapping Exercises. Their stories are ghostwritten by me, but I tried whenever possible to include their own words (shown in italics). I asked the youth what their concept of a "successful release" was, and used the Possible Selves Mapping Process (Marshall & Guenette, 2011) to identify their hoped-for and feared selves. Finally, I asked what kinds of supports and barriers they identify that could assist them in their upcoming release. In the writing of these stories, I have attempted to remove all identifying features to annonymize the stories of the participants.

Mike

My name is Mike and I was really eager to participate in this study. I've spent a lot of my teen years in jail, and in the past I didn't really care. I told people I cared, and that I didn't want to screw up any more, people like my brother Lars, and my PO, but really, I didn't want to change. But lately I've been thinking. In court a while back, someone said that I'm "institutionalized." I had a pretty close call lately while I was out, in fact I'm not even supposed to be alive right now. So for real this time, I am going to try and do stuff differently when I get out. I want to have a successful release, if I can get *off probation, and just have a normal life – not keep coming back into custody. Going to school or having a job, maybe having a girlfriend, um, just hanging out with regular kids.* I'm going to meet up with some family I haven't seen in a while. I'm excited about this chance, and hopefully the chance of doing something different with them and for them.

The hopes I have for myself include *getting new friends, getting off probation, finding work, sports, school, family, and girlfriend*. I think that if I could get a new group of friends, friends who aren't involved in crime, then maybe I'd be less likely to get involved in crime myself. I get into trouble a lot because of stuff that my friends do, and then I join in and get arrested and charged. I hope I'll meet new friends at school, or on sports teams, or maybe at work. Playing hockey might give me a chance to make some friends who are involved in something other than crime. And if I'm busy doing something that's productive and healthy, maybe I'll stay out of trouble. Getting a girlfriend might be a good way to stay out of trouble too. A girlfriend who wasn't in and out of jail would probably encourage me to stay out to be with her and to do different things with her. My brother was involved in crime, but he ended up meeting a girl who wanted him to change. He stopped coming to jail and changed a lot. Maybe the same thing could happen for me. I don't have much of a connection with my family, my dad lives on the mainland. I'm hoping to see him again when I get out, and maybe get closer to him.

Even though I'm still in jail, I already have a job lined up for me. It's a good job for a while after I get out, but eventually I'd like to get into construction, particularly to work in forestry. I completed the forestry program at the jail in Prince George, so I think I'd be good at it. I think that getting a high school diploma will do a lot to make me more successful in life overall, not just in the job market.

I have four months probation left, not too much! But it's so hard to get off probation! I also often end up breaching, and then breaking the law and getting more charges, so it's not just the breach I need to deal with, but new charges as well.

Towards the end of our first talk, I thought of another hope that I wanted to add. I really want to get *more tattoos*. I already have a few, and love getting them and having them!

I only came up with two feared selves coming back to *jail* and *not being successful*. Not being successful relates to stuff like not achieving all the stuff I'm hoping to achieve. If I'm not successful I'm going to lose everything that I wanted to look forward to. Like I'll be successful if I'm staying out of jail, getting off probation, getting stuff happening. If I do come back, or get more probation or not go to school or work, then I'll know I'm not being successful. I feel like if I screw up, even just one time, it would really bring me down and make it hard for me to want to keep going and working towards success.

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. *Getting a job* is my most likely to happen hoped-for self. I have a job lined up already, since one of my workers hooked me up with a job at a food place. I also had to talk about ways to increase the chances of this good stuff happening. Getting a job was sort of a tough thing to talk about ways of making it happen, since it already happened. Since I already have the job, it will be important to actually show up for the job so I don't get fired.

To *get off probation* is the hoped-for self I wanted the most. I would really like to get off probation because I think it would feel really, really good. I've been on it forever, and it would feel like a big accomplishment to get off. It would also be so different not to have people telling me what to do all the time, to have a bit of freedom. And obviously it would be a lot harder to come back to jail if I wasn't on probation. I come back a lot on breaches, and once I breach, I decide that if I've already screwed up this much, might as well "do it up". They sometimes add more probation time to my order, so if I wasn't on probation, it would be harder for me to come back to jail. Obviously the biggest thing that will help me get off probation is stopping doing crime. Another is that I'll have to follow my conditions. I will have to stay away from some of my friends, since I usually end up doing criminal things with them. There are some parts of

town too that I'll need to avoid, since in those neighbourhoods I'm used to doing crime. And I think if I spend more time with my family, I will have strong relationships with them and not want to let them down. If I work, and spend time with my family, I'll have less time to do crime, and other stuff to focus on.

I decided that I had the same fear for both the fear I am afraid of the most, and the one that I think is most likely. I am most fearful of *coming back to jail,* and I think it's very possible that it could happen. There's a good chance I could come back to jail because I might just stop caring while I'm out, and do something dumb that will bring me back to jail. Also, it's super easy for me to breach, because even though I don't have many conditions, I can still make a mistake and come back. I'm also in a revolving door; I've been here longer than Kate! *And I don't think that… I don't know. When I was out, I kind of thought I can't really function when I'm out. But I do fine in here.* In court, they said I was institutionalized, which means that *you're stuck on a routine to keep coming back to jail, right? You don't really like, know how to live properly on the outs; stuck to the life in here I kind of feel like nervous and stuff on the outs.*

Supports and barriers. I think that the house I stay at, and my *foster mom*, will really help me succeed when I get out. The house is full of cool stuff that I can spend my time doing, like video games and stuff. And my foster mom is very cool and supportive. *My brother* is also someone who provides me with unconditional support and love. He cares about me even if I screw up, but he has been where I am and he wants me to change my ways and do well in life. My *social worker* is really good at helping me with really practical stuff, like getting me clothes and stuff. She also helps me when it comes to stuff like reconnecting with my dad. As soon as I get out of here she is taking me to the mainland to meet him. My *ISSP worker* is really

supportive and she got me the job when I get out. I think *work and sports* will also be supports because they will provide me with structure and healthy peers and lifestyles.

There are two main things that will be barriers for me when I get out. The first is *breaching, like the choices I make*. The other thing that's going to be tough is my *peer group*. Hanging out with them might lead me to get back into old habits and do bad things.

The biggest reason I really don't want to come back to jail is because of my family. If I come back to jail, it will really damage any relationship I start to have with my dad. Coming back to jail just screws me over in the long run. Jail isn't fun, I miss freedom! I think the biggest thing this time that is going to help me stay out of jail though is the fact that I really don't want to come back this time, and am taking this seriously. In the past, I said I wanted to do well, but this time I actually mean it and want to stay out of jail. So this time, if I screw up and come back, I'll not just be letting other folks down, but I'll be letting myself down too. This is the first time I've ever felt like this. I have a feeling that I want to do good, and that I'm going to do good this time. So if I don't do good, I will let down myself more than anything.

Fiasco

I was the first kid that Kate interviewed. I figure a successful release is *pretty much not committing new crimes, not getting new charges, trying to get good grades, if you can. Try to find new friends that can lead me to a right way in life. Just stuff that can help you, I guess. You can't just change it all at once. You have to do step-by-step, right.* Since I have a lot of time on my hands I've thought a lot about this stuff.

Hoped-for selves. I came up with some hopes that I labelled "Life Goals," *going to school, getting a job, getting off probation, meeting positive people to set me on a positive lifestyle*. I'm applying to a work preparedness program, so if I get into it, I'll get a job. If not,

I'll go to school. I want to get off probation, and I think meeting positive people might help me do that. I often do crime with my friends, so if I could get new friends who aren't involved with crime, it would help me stop committing crimes. Then I also came up with a group that I titled, "things I need to have a better life," *spending more time with family, counselling and therapy to help me choose the right decision. Family* is a really big deal to me, and I've missed out on a lot of time with them. I want to make it up to my family, especially my sisters. I don't know for sure, but I think that counselling might help me. I get along well with my forensics worker, so that'll probably help.

Feared selves. My feared for selves are *new charges, ending up an adult [jail], dying, new family conflicts, new beefs, hanging out with the same group of friends that got me into trouble* and *doing drugs*. Most of these have to do with crime, so this is probably the thing that's most on my mind. These fears are based on things that I have past experience with. I labelled these fears "things I don't want in my life." I didn't put them into different groups, just put them all together under this title because *from my perspective they all belong together.*

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. The hope I want the most is *meeting positive people to set me on a positive lifestyle.* This is the thing I want most because the friends I have now aren't positive people. They're involved in crime and that usually leads to me being involved with crime. I will know they are positive people if they are going to school, or if they have a job or if they are involved in stuff after school or work. And obviously, if they aren't on probation or in and out of jail I'll know they're good people for me to be around. I think I could make some good friends at Narcotics Anonymous. I don't have a serious problem with drugs, I just think that maybe if I smoked less pot, I'd stay on track better. When I smoke weed, I really

stop caring about stuff, and don't focus as well on school or work or whatever. Most of all, I figure if I am a positive person, I'll be more likely to meet and hang out with positive people.

The hoped-for self I think is the most likely to happen is *spending more time with family*. I think this is the hoped-for self that's going to be easiest to accomplish. Also, since I'm hoping to get rid of a lot of stuff that has kept me away from my family (like crime, drugs and jail), I'll be able to be with them more. It will probably be a good thing for me to spend more time with my family, because it'll mean less time for crime and other bad things. I realized how important this would all be while I was in jail over the last few months. To increase the chances of me spending more time with my family, I'm going make it a priority to spend time with them. If I plan to do specific stuff with my sisters, like taking them to the movies, then it was probably more likely that I'd do it. I missed out on a lot with my family, I want to make it up to them.

The feared for self I think is most likely is *that I will breach my probation* because it's so easy do. I've done it a lot. I usually get breached for red zones (being in places I'm not allowed to be), having a cell phone, missing appointments with my PO and hanging out with no contacts. Obviously the biggest thing I can do to avoid breaching my conditions is to actually follow my conditions. The toughest condition that I'll really need to focus on is getting home for my curfew at 9pm. Also, I'll need to stay out of downtown, I just get into trouble when I'm down there. I think a big one will also be staying away from drugs and alcohol. My PO and I actually get along pretty well, so I think that if I keep this relationship strong, I'll have a better chance of doing well on probation.

The feared self that I was most fearful of is *dying*. It's a big one for me because I have almost been killed. It had to do with my lifestyle and the life of crime. When it comes to decreasing the chances of me dying, it's hard to talk about. There are some things that I can do.

I can stop drug-dealing, and getting clean and not using drugs will also decrease the chances of me dying early. Finally, not creating more beefs, avoiding any more conflicts with people will help me live a happier and healthier life overall, even though I can't avoid dying forever.

Supports and barriers. One of the big supports I see for myself is the *work program* that I'm hoping to go to. It would give me skills to work a legit job, and would teach me a new way to be in the world. My *ISSP worker* would also be a big support. She helps me with stuff like driving me places, and feeding me! *My family* will be a huge support, because they want me to succeed legitimately. I'm going to try and really take advantage of the support my family can offer me. Oh, and after a while of talking, I also came up with the idea that having a *good girlfriend*, like one who isn't involved in the life of crime, would be a good support for me because it would make it less likely I'd get involved in crime again. Finding a girl that can help me too, like, set you on, like, a good track, right. Kind of like, motivate you to, do something with your life.

One thing that will get in my way when I get out, is not making it home in time for my *curfew*. I don't drink a lot, but when I do, I usually end up skipping my curfew. I often miss my curfew because I'm hanging out with friends that are motivating me to do something wrong. Hanging out with girls might mean I breach or get into trouble. I think *money and dealing drugs* will be a challenge for me. You get to know people who are associated with dealing, and if you quit dealing, you have to say goodbye to those people too. But, it's more than that, it's money, because *you always want it, you want it more than you need it*. There are some things that are hard to translate from dealing to legit work. *When you work, you have to wait two weeks just to get a pay-check and it's not going to be that much, because it's your first time job. And if you want to buy something expensive, that's going to be your whole check and then you don't have*

any more money to buy, like, food, clothes. But other parts of drug dealing can be applied to legit work. Like, people think that being a successful dealer is easy, but it actually takes a lot of time, hard work, and consistency. You also get good at customer service!

The last thing I think could be a challenge for me in the future is that even though I'm trying to change, *people from my past* might not care. *Outgoing, if you're trying to change, but you have people that are after you from a long time ago, it's going to be hard, because you don't want to do something, but if they come at you, you have to do something, right.* And you'll get in just the amount of trouble as them, right?

Subway

This is my first time in jail, so it's my first release too. When I get out, *I want to go clothes shopping, new shoes, [get] Subway and then going out with my buddies.* I also hope that I get a job when I'm out, and I don't want to come back to jail, but I think it's going to happen. When I think of leaving my life of crime, I want to change it but I don't think it's going to happen – at least not for a while.

Hoped-for selves. I came up with some hoped-for selves and titled one group, "what I want most" and it *included going home to my family (like getting out of foster care), getting a job, getting a car, and winning the Lotto 6/49 and getting $10 million.* I labelled these hopes "what I want most" because they are the things that are the most important to me. I really want to go home to my family. I have been in and out of foster care for a while, and lived with both of my parents on and off for the last few years. Being at home with my mom and my siblings is the place I most want to be. I've never had a job, so I'm not really sure what kind of job I'd like to have, but I still want one. I've never had a car either, but I know I want a corvette. Don't really know why, just think it'd be cool to have one. And winning the lotto, well it would help with

getting a car, it would help with everything! I know it's a long shot, but it would be cool if I got it.

I also came up with a group of hopes that I labelled "hopes," and it includes *maybe trying to stay out of trouble,* and *have enough patience for school*. These two hopes are less of a priority, and even though they would be cool, I want the stuff under "what I want most" more. Like I said, I'm not sure that I'm ready to stop doing crime, but maybe I would like to eventually. And school isn't that important to me, I just think it would be easier to do school work if I didn't have such a hard time focusing.

Feared selves. I didn't really like the idea of a "feared self" because I really am not afraid of anything. I just don't want some of these things to happen. I came up with some things I don't want to happen like, *getting gated,* and *coming back within a month*. I labelled these "hope it doesn't happen." I'm worried I'll get gated because I'm still being investigated for a few robberies. Being gated mean that when I get out of jail, and just as I'm leaving admissions, the cops will show up and charge me with another crime, so I just get brought right back into jail. I could come back to jail because I might smoke weed while I'm out. There's a chance that I'll get drug tested, and then breached for using. I don't know why I picked a month as the timeline that would be a let-down to me, I just think I'd like to stay out for at least a month. *But I think something would happen within a month that… and I'll come back.*

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. The hoped-for self I think is most likely to happen is *maybe trying to stay out of trouble.* It's kind of a surprise to me that this one would be the most likely, but I think this one is the easiest to do. Like, I don't need to do anything to accomplish this self, it's just that I have to stop or not do something. It's easier than going to school. I don't really have to do work to stay out of trouble. You just sit around and go to your

PO meetings. I think the best way to stay out of trouble, is obviously by following my conditions and not committing new crimes. This can be tough, so I think if I try hard to stay at my foster home, and not hang out with some of my friends, and not drink. This way I won't get pulled into something that might get me in trouble, and will help me keep my curfew.

The hoped-for self I want most is *going home*. This possible self was not really a surprise. My family is really important to me, and living with my sisters, brother and mom is more important than anything else. And living with my family is way better than living in my foster home. In order to go home to my family, I need to improve my behaviour, not be involved in crime, and follow my orders and probation conditions. This way, I could prove to my family and the Ministry that I am ready and able to go home.

The most likely to happen feared for self is probably *coming back within a month*. It's easy to do, and that's why I think it's most likely to happen. I have so many conditions. So, I'm pretty sure I'm going to breach. And if I breach once, I get sent back here. I don't think I will have trouble not committing new crimes, I think breaching will be what will most likely bring me back to jail. But honestly, I'm not sure I'm ready to try and do good yet. *I do want to do well, but, like, it starts to get boring. It sounds weird but I get bored trying to do good.*

The feared self that I really don't want to have happen is *getting gated* but I think this fear is the one that is most likely to happen. There's a chance that the police will charge me for crimes that are presently under investigation, so as soon as I get out of jail and will pick me up in admissions. If the police charge me, I can't do anything to stop that at this point. But I could stop committing crimes in the future, so that it's less likely that I'll be investigated for more crimes. But really, that's easier said than done.

Supports and barriers. A big support for me was doing these *last four months in jail.* I don't like jail, but it gave me some time to think about what's going on in my life, and what I want. My *social worker* helps me out a lot, because she gets me a lot of the stuff I need, like clothes and other basics. My *ISSP worker* is cool too, she helps me get to my appointments and drives me around when I need a lift. I have a *counsellor* in the community who I really get along with. He listens to what I want and is someone I can talk to. Even my *PO* is a support. Even though he is the one who usually decides if I'm going back to jail or not, he wants me to succeed and learn from my mistakes. I might have to go to the program Coastline. It's supposed to teach me survival skills and build my confidence and stuff, but I don't think it'll be all that helpful. I am hoping to do a *work program* that can train me to be a landscaper, and if I don't get into that program, I'm going to look for a job. Oh, and my *family* is a huge support because they want me to do well and they are motivation for me to do well so that I can live with them again.

I could also think about some barriers to me doing well too. The most obvious ones were *drugs and alcohol*. When I drink or use drugs, I am more likely to breach and break the law. Also, all of *my friends* are drinkers and use drugs, so they usually encourage me to drink or use drugs, and then I get into trouble.

I didn't really like doing this exercise, but I think Kate's a big support for me too. At the end I told UVic that *Kate's gonna get an A+. If she doesn't, then your university is set on false ideas and stuff like that.*

Dorito

I'm the only girl that Kate interviewed, not surprising because there are so few girls in the jail. I laughed a lot and had a lot of fun doing the interview. She asked me what my idea of a successful release was. It took me a while to understand what she was asking, but when I figured

it out, I said, *certainly not drinking. Having people to support me so I'm not bored throughout the day and go and do stupid things. I've got to go to school, too. I only have two years left. I also want to stop coming to jail.*

Hoped-for selves. Hoped-for selves sound a lot like goals, and I have a lot of those! I labelled them "things I want to have happen in my oncoming in my future": *get my own place to live, finish school and hopefully go to college, be respected again in my community, be independent and not have to depend on anyone else, be good role model for siblings so she'll want to be successful like me,* and *get a job so I can pay for food and stuff.* A lot of the hoped-for selves I have relate to independence. I really value independence, so that's probably why so many of these possible selves involve this stuff. I also have a little sister, and she's following in my footsteps now, she's not doing very well. So I'd rather she follow my footsteps doing good things, than doing illegal or dangerous things. I want to go to college and be like the doctor on TV called "House". I want to help people, but also have some challenge in my job. I also really want to be respected in my community again. B*ecause my family has said some really nasty things about me, and nobody really gives a shit about me... There was a time when I was respected in the community. Back then, I wasn't acting out, and I was doing well. I want that back again.*

Feared selves. I came up with two different groups of feared selves, "These would be a sad thing if any of these happened while I'm trying to achieve my goals": *2 fail my goals I've made 4 myself, have someone ruin my goals, go to adult, 2 get pregnant, 2 start drinking again, 2 wind up doing the bad things (illegal) my friends do, to start doing drugs,* and *2 have 2 depend on someone looking after me all my life.*

I know my family does drugs, I've seen what drugs can do to people, but alcohol hurts people too. *I've seen people who drink a lot and it becomes a cycle. They drink lots, and then they start selling all their stuff. And then they can't pay rent, and then they're living somewhere else, and then they probably get kicked out… it just goes on and on.* I quit drinking for a while, but I went through some bad times and started drinking again. Hopefully I can stay sober when I get out.

I also am worried about some of the stuff my friends do. I might get blamed for some of the stuff they do, so I don't want to associate with them if that's what they're going to do. I guess if I need to, that means I need to stop hanging out with some of them altogether.

I also said I was afraid of getting pregnant because I've never really wanted kids. I think I could raise one well if I ended up having a kid, but I'm not ready now.

And then I said I was afraid of going to adult jail. I hate being in jail with teenage girls, I would probably really hate being in a jail with adult women! Oh, and of course I'd be afraid of getting my ass kicked. *Having someone ruin my goals* is one that Kate hasn't heard before. This basically means that I don't want anyone to distract me from what is important to me. *Like, I guess it could be friends, telling me to, "Let's go drink, let's go do this*. I really just want to be surrounded by people who are going to help me achieve the things that are important to me, not be around people who are distracting me or influencing me to do things that are bad. The last fear I have has to do with *failing the goals I've set for myself*. I just think it would be really bad if I didn't do the things I want to do, or to screw up my future. I want to achieve the goals that I've set.

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. I think the hoped-for self that is most likely to happen is that I will be a *good role model* for my sister so she will want to be successful like

me. It is really important for me to help my sister. I really care about her, and I don't want her making the same mistakes that I have. I also think it's more likely to happen because I have a plan in place to help change my behaviour so that my sister has a good role model to follow. So for example, I really want to go to school and stop doing stupid stuff. This will give my sister something else to learn from and look to. To help set a better example for my sister, I need to improve my own behaviour. The first thing I can change about my behaviour is my drinking. In fact, since I stopped drinking, my sister did too! And finishing school will show my sister that education is important, and something we should work towards. Maybe also offering my sister some good advice, like lessons I've learned from my own mistakes. It will have to be positive advice! If I stayed out of jail, it would help me be a better role model to my sister.

The hoped-for self I want the most is that I'll *finish school and quite possibly going to college*. This is the hoped-for self I want the most because that has a lot to do with my goals – getting my own place and a job, a good job, to get my own place. There are a lot of things I can do to finish high school and maybe go to college. First of all, I need to actually go to school, not just while in jail but also in the community too! I also need to do the work that is necessary to graduate, even if that means doing homework! I should also look into what I need to get into college, and what I need to do to become a doctor like House.

I said that *getting pregnant* was probably the feared for self that is the most likely to become a reality. I think it's likely because so many of my friends have become pregnant unexpectedly. Since I don't think I want to stop having sex altogether, I think using protection (like the pill or a condom) would help me not get pregnant. Obviously, not having unprotected sex would help decrease the chances of me getting pregnant. Also, I need to try and control how much I drink, because when I'm drinking, I'm less likely to be responsible. And I can try to talk

with my sex partners about how I don't want kids, and how we can take steps to avoid getting pregnant.

The feared self that I am most afraid of is that I'm going to *fail at the goals I've set for myself*. It is the biggest fear I have. I'm almost up to that age where I can't be living with my siblings and depend on my social worker to do everything for me anymore. I need to start becoming more independent and self-sufficient. The idea of not being independent is very stressful for me! If I failed at my goals, all the things I'd hoped to achieve for myself wouldn't happen. The big thing I need to avoid is drinking. Drinking gets in the way of a lot of things I want to do. If I can behave, like go to school, go home on time, not drink, not do crime and follow my conditions, I think it will be easier for me to reach my goals. This time, I need to actually listen to the advice given by people who are and maybe take it, and act on it! I had some good advice once, *I had one girl, she said she'd be there for me, like, she'd help me quit drinking, she'd help me to go to school, help with my schooling, and staying away from people I shouldn't be around who create those obstacles for me.* And of course, I need to stay out of jail! Nothing about jail is connected to the things I want for my future.

Supports and barriers. There are quite a few supports that I can think of that will help me when I get released. Like, *my ISSP worker* has already offered to help me with school-work, basically she'll act like a tutor. And my *counsellor* in the community, she helps me because she gives me someone to talk to. When I have someone to talk to, I don't feel so much pressure, and I feel less likely to drink. I can just let things out, so I don't have the weight on my world to start drinking again. My *social worker* gives me options, like about which program I should go to, and gives me good advice and access to resources. My *PO* is a support, because he really wants me to get off probation. He has a plan that he wants to do in order to get me off probation by my

18th birthday. Also, I'm going to a *program* when I get out, Oasis. This program will help me get school work done, teach me independent living skills, and maybe help me get a job. I might attend something like *Narcotics Anonymous* or *Alcoholics Anonymous* as well, but I'm not sure. I also think I have a few *friends* who would be able to support and help me be successful when I get out of jail.

I came up with a lot of barriers that I would consider pretty obvious. *Drinking* is a big barrier for me. I also think a lot of my *peers* are not going to be supportive, but may actually be barriers to me succeeding. Because I have *a record*, then I get in more trouble. My friends don't seem to understand that so they end up putting me in a rough spot.

Jimbo Slice

I'm a kid who has been in jail on and off for the last few years. I heard about what Kate was doing, and was excited to be part of it. I am of course, going to give her a bit of a hard time though while we do the interviews. I would know I was being successful when *I get out of jail if I'm not back, not breaching, committing new offences. Basically, if I'm not in jail, I know I'm doing well.*

Hoped-for selves. I came up with a lot of hoped-for selves that I want when I get released. I really hope to *get off probation*. I want the freedom and to not have to worry about breaching, coming back to jail, or ending up with more probation. My sister means a lot to me, and so does my girlfriend. I have a *good relationship with both of them*, and I want to keep it that way. It's also important that I build a *healthy relationship with my mom*. We don't have a good relationship, but I would really like it if we did. Eventually, I'd like to *go to Europe with my dad* when he gets out of jail. He's not allowed in America or Canada anymore, so visiting him is pretty much the only way I could see him. And, I think it'd be cool to visit Europe since that's

where I'm from. I want to make *friends* who aren't in and out of jail all the time. I feel that sometimes my friends bring me down.

Living independently soon after I get out of jail is really important to me. I don't want to be still riding on the bus when I'm 18 years old, so I really want a *car*. I also want *to control my marijuana and alcohol problem*. This would mean using it only on special occasions or even stop completely. *Graduating high school* would help me in a lot of ways. *I also want to get a job, have a job as, like, a welder or something in, like, a trade as a job to start a career. Football* is really important to me, and I'm a great football player. The sport has opened up a lot of opportunities for me, like getting back into a school. I really want to play again next year.

Feared for selves. I found it a lot harder to come up with the feared for selves than it was for me to come up with the hoped-for selves. I did manage to create quite a list, including: *going back to jail, death of friends, abiding my [probation] order, to get an adult record, probation, relationship with mom not improving, smoke weed/drink, grandpa's illness, relationship with girlfriend ending, not graduating high school, going insane,* and *becoming fat.*

Going back to jail is a tough and I really don't like being here, so coming back here, on new charges or on a breach would not be a good thing. I also have a fear of *following the conditions of my probation order* because I consider it really hard to do. I think that the police hassle me, even when I'm not doing anything wrong. It's probably because of my record, they watch me more closely and want to talk to me more. I'm also really worried about getting an *adult record*. It limits opportunities for me in the future, plus going to an adult facility sounds like something I would really not like. *Probation* is a fear of mine, because I'm scared of breaching my order and ending up back in jail.

Obviously *losing a person close to me* would be really difficult and not something I'd want to have happen. I'm also worried about my *relationship with my mom*. Pretty much everything about the relationship I have with my mom stresses me out, and I'm worried it will stay like this, or maybe get worse. My *grandpa is sick*, so I'm worried about him. I would be really sad if my *relationship with my girlfriend ended*, and I don't want us to break up.

I'm also fearful that I will *continue to smoke weed or drink* when I get out. When I smoke weed, I lose motivation and don't do as well as when I don't smoke it. I'm also worried that I won't finish high school. It's important to me that I *finish high school*, so I would be disappointed if I didn't.

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. Of all the hoped-for selves I picked out, I think that *keeping my relationship with my girlfriend and my sister* is the most likely. It's important that these relationships stay strong and healthy. I also think that there isn't much of a chance that things will change between us. I've been through tough times with my sister and with my girlfriend, so I know we have a lot of staying power. Obviously the relationship with my sister is long term, but I've been friends with my girlfriend for a long time, even before we started dating, so we have a lot of history. In order to make sure that I stay close with my sister and girlfriend, I'm going to keep being nice to them and do nice things for them. I also want to make sure to plan activities to do with them that they'd appreciate, like my sister likes going to the movies, so I'd want to take her to the movies. Staying out of jail would also help our relationship stay strong because neither, my girlfriend, or my sister, like it when I come to jail. They want me to succeed legitimately, and coming to jail obviously isn't a part of that plan.

The hoped-for self that I really want to happen is that I will *get off probation*. I mentioned this before, but really, I think my chances of coming back to jail will go down

considerably if I could get off probation. It would basically be the first step for me to stop coming to jail. Also, I think it would be great to have more freedom, something that I don't have a lot of when I'm on probation, I don't have to do anything that I don't wanna do. When I think of things I can do to get off probation, there seem to be two different options. The first, which in some ways I think might be easier, involves staying in jail until my probation is over. If I was to stay in for the rest of my order, I'd get out without any probation left and then obviously wouldn't be able to breach unless I re-offended and ended up back on probation. If I did get out of jail before my order is done, I would need to follow the conditions of my order, in particular stay away from drugs and alcohol, stay away from no-contacts, and reside where directed. If I spend more time with people who want me to succeed, like my girlfriend, then I will also be more likely to succeed.

The feared for self that is most likely to happen is that I'm going to *come back to jail*. I really don't want to come back to jail, because it means that I can't see my family and friends as much as I'd like. There's a chance that my PO and the judge will want to keep me in jail this time until the end of my probation order. If I do get out before the end of my probation order, I think there's a good chance that I might breach, and therefore end up coming back into jail. It would also obviously help if I did not commit any more crimes, and avoid hanging out with people who are involved in the life of crime.

The biggest fear I have is that I'll get an *adult record*. If I get an adult record, I won't be allowed to leave Canada, and won't be able to visit my dad. An adult record is different from a youth record, because an adult record doesn't go away. Having a record might limit the chances of getting some jobs in the future too. And frankly, going to an adult facility is not something I want to deal with. Avoiding getting an adult record would involve a few different things. I think

that my time in youth custody has taught me that I would not like being in an adult facility. Getting off my youth order, and practicing being out of the system would also be a good step towards living a legit life. Obviously, I can't commit any crimes as an adult, and I think staying away from alcohol and weed would help that. The last thing that I think would help me stay out of adult jail would be to stay away from lifers, I'd need to get new friends.

Supports and barriers. There are a lot of supports I see for myself. I think a *drug and alcohol counsellor* can help me learn ways to control my drinking and drug use. There are a lot of people in my *family* that want me to succeed, such as my grandma, my sister, my girlfriend, and my *PO* wants me to succeed too. My *ISSP worker* is a real support for me, and helps me with a lot of the basics, like giving me rides and stuff. I also think *sports* will act as a support for me because they give me something positive to do, and will introduce me to a different group of peers. Finally, *I'm my main support*, the decisions that I make are the most important, so I'm the biggest support I have.

The main barriers I see for myself include my *peers* because my peers that I hang out with always want to do crime and make money off crime. And like I said before, when I *drink or smoke weed*, I lose motivation to do well, and can get into trouble. The last big barrier I see for myself is that it seems the *cops hassle me a lot*, probably because I'm on probation and I have a record.

I asked Kate, "why didn't you lecture me and be mean to me like you normally do?" She said it's because she's not acting as a counsellor, she's acting like a researcher. I think it's just because she's being recorded!

Jarvis

This is the first time I've ever been in jail, but I'm finishing up an eleven-month sentence. I know for sure that I don't want to go back to jail, and I've been thinking a lot about what I want for my future. I told Kate I was going to be very honest, and there was no point in not being straight up with how my life is, and how I want it to be. My idea of a successful release is to not coming back to jail, to start a new life I guess, to learn from my mistakes and get a job and then go to school, travel.

Hoped-for selves. There are a lot of hopes that I came up with. I labelled one group "good changes" and this includes stuff I want to do like *get a legit job, make new friends, go driving, travel the world or something. Be successful in life somewhere like just be a counsellor or something. Trying to go to college or university to get a degree so I can actually do something*. I also have a group I call my "to do list": *learn from mistakes, help others, family, give my mom support or whatever, like if she needs money or something. Stop family members from coming to jail. After me like my kids won't come to jail or something like that. Move forward, like just moving forward with life I guess. Help people who helped me out and people who helped me, try to help them in some way. Help out kids that were living in poverty. Change the kids on the streets to a legit way of thinking. Like you don't have to hustle to make money all the time, I guess they can just like get a legit job. Forgive people, get forgiven for the bad things I've done.*

I know that I would be successful if *I was helping people, sort of paying back all the bad things I've done. Helping people would just make me feel better, you know*. I'd especially like to help out kids who are in a similar place as me, involved in the same stuff. They might not change, but at least I tried.

I really want to help my family out. Things with them haven't always been great, they haven't always been there for me, but I still want to help them change and be happy. I worry a lot about my mom's relationship with her boyfriend, and I try to support her, but I can't really do anything about it. *I wish mom would stop using drugs and drinking, and I was thinking that she needs to get over past right and move on but she had a lot of shit done to her in the past right, like but it's just time for her to move on.* She can't live like that forever. It's going to kill her or something. *That's what I try do to right, in the terms of the past, I know I did a lot of stuff but I can just try and move on right?*

Being forgiven for all the bad stuff I've done is really important to me. *I know I can't be forgiven for all the things I've done but like there's some stuff I know that I can probably get forgiven for but I'm not too sure.*

Feared selves. I have one group of feared selves that I titled "Not changing." In this group is I came up with *Getting out and like doing something stupid and ending up coming back. My mom's boyfriend and her relationship not getting better, mom not getting better with her addiction and whatever. Trying a new lifestyle, like try to stay out of friends and like all the gang, and the dope. Changing, try to change my personality and like who I am, a new way of thinking. And going back to the old ways like doing what I used to do, scared of having payback, revenge, like something I did in the past can turn around on me. Going to penitentiary. Losing the people I love most like my family or friends. Leaving a gang and not suffering the consequences. Not being forgiven for the things I've done. Karma.*

It's hard to think about starting out a new way of life. It's scary to think that I need to do things differently, and scary to think about what might happen if I don't change my ways. I might end up in adult, or I might end up having bad stuff from my past catching up with me.

I'm worried a lot about my *family*, and *my mom's relationship with her boyfriend*. I want them to work it out, but I'm scared of what might happen if they don't, and the violence continues.

I'm afraid of Karma, and of revenge. There are certain ways that you are supposed to leave the gang life, and I'm worried that some stuff from my past might catch up with me.

Most hoped-for, most feared, most likely. When I think of all the hopes I had, I think that it is most likely that I will *travel*. This is the most likely to happen because I've already set my mind to it. I need to wait to get off probation, but after that I will be able to go. In order to increase the chances of me being able to travel, I need to stay out of jail, and leave the criminal lifestyle. I need to get a job in order to pay for the trip, and I'd like to get a friend or family member to travel with me.

I had a hard time figuring out which hoped-for self I wanted to have happen the most. I was torn between two, *being successful in life* and *helping out kids living in poverty*. Kate suggested we kind of, combine them, so I hope I'll be *successful by helping kids who live in poverty*. I want to be successful because, so far I haven't been all that successful I guess. My idea of success *includes having a family, staying out of jail, supporting my family through hard times*. To increase the chances of me being successful and getting a job helping kids, I need to learn from my mistakes. I need to help people who need help. Maybe going to school to get some education about how to help people would be beneficial. By offering support to my family, I can help them be happier. I think I need to move on from my past mistakes and make better choices. That includes leaving the criminal lifestyle, and not coming back to jail. I need to learn a new perspective.

The fear I think is most likely to happen is *revenge or payback.* I have done a lot of things in my past that were bad. I also left a gang without really going through the right process. I basically bounced. I'm worried that this choice might end up catching up with me. Thinking about ways to decrease the chances of payback or revenge happening was hard. I don't want to feel like a bitch and run from the situation, but I don't want to get pulled back into bad scenes. I think the best thing I can do is not start any new beefs, and avoid the people from my old life. I also plan on moving. I'm not going to let this dictate my life, I'm going to hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

And without a doubt, the feared for self I fear the most is that I *won't be forgiven for the bad things I have done.* I've done a lot of bad things, and I really want to get forgiven, but I don't think I can be forgiven for everything I've done. I've hurt some people, and I don't think I can be forgiven for that. I think if I was to be forgiven, it would make me happy, allow me to be happy. Being successful and not being forgiven for the things I've done are kind of like one in the same thing. Because at the same time I want to be successful in life, the same time I want to be forgiven. So the way I can be successful is *like I know I can't like really redo everything I've done in the past but I can like help out other people that are going through the same problem I was a little kid.* It's hard to think about ways to increase the chances of me being forgiven. I am taking part in restorative justice, so this might be one way to work towards forgiveness. I need to not do anything illegal anymore, so I show the victims that I'm serious about changing. Also, I think it will be important to forgive people who have hurt me. *Like if I forgive people like I want to be forgiven, it's like a baby step towards being forgiven myself.* It will be hard to forgive some people in my life, like my dad. I can't expect to be forgiven though, if I don't at least try to forgive other people.

I haven't really thought a lot about this stuff, but I have felt guilty for a long time. There were some surprises on my maps. I didn't expect to see forgiven as a hoped-for self. I didn't think I would have talked about being successful in life. Up until a while ago, I thought I'd always be a lifer, and now, I'm thinking about doing something really different, something legit that helps people. Doing this was hard. It was hard thinking about my past and having to plan for my future. But the maps were helpful, they gave me a chance to look at it what I want and what I'm worried about. It gives me a chance to figure stuff out, and kind of, contains all this stuff.

Supports and barriers. I found the *counsellors* and *teachers* really supportive. *Being able to talk to someone who is safe, and who have good heads on their shoulders.* I'm also going to a *program* when I get out. It'll be like a middle ground between jail and living in the community. Hopefully it will help with things like learning how to live independently and life-skills kind of stuff. There are *Indigenous ceremonies* that are for forgiveness, I think those would do a lot to help me. I know *my brother* and *my mom* want me to do well too, so they are supports for me.

The biggest barrier I see for myself is *leaving the old lifestyle* I had. Like, I'm going to have to change my mentality from the gang mentality to a legit mentality. I need to say goodbye to my *friends that are still involved in crime*. I need to stay away from *drugs*, and the whole lifestyle that goes with it. I'm also worried about *cops charging me with something from the past and then bringing me back to jail*. I think that if I came back, I'd lose a lot of hope for the future, and might not be able to try and change anymore. And I'm worried that because of my reputation, *cops might keep following me or giving me a hard time*.

Sweet Lil'

I've been in and out of jail since I was 12 years old. I've spent more time in custody than I have in the community. I've talked in the past about wanting to change, but I really want to and need to now. *Like no one's a perfect criminal right, so you just can't always be a criminal for the rest of your life. It's not about not getting caught it's about not doing crime because you can get caught.* This time when I get out, I want to work towards success. My idea of a successful release is *support from family and friends, have a plan lined up like school, work and to have motivation to do good too. If you don't want to do good, you're not going to do good right?*

Hoped-for and feared selves. I had a lot of hopes and fears written on the brainstorming map. I grouped them in a few different categories and these categories had both hopes and fears including, *scared of being in jail, follow my probation while I'm still on probation, stop doing things that will get me in trouble, and get of probation*. If I don't follow my probation, or if I keep committing crimes, I might end up back in jail. I hope that I can follow my probation order, so that I can get out of the crime cycle and the system.

Another group of possible selves includes *start working out and pay attention to my health, I really don't want to be unhealthy, I'm scared of being in a struggle for health or money or anything because how I was raised in a struggle, of dying young,* and *not being able to look after myself.* I think health is a way to happiness, and it's not just about working out and eating well. It's about staying out of the drug scene, having money to look after yourself and looking after yourself. *This is just from experience that I've seen right, from friends and family. Like my mom when she does drugs you can tell she's not healthy and she's not stable. She's not able to do the things that she could do if she wasn't right. So it's like I don't want to be in that struggle, I don't want to be that. I want to be able to do stuff and have my mind functioning.* I think *dying* is

something that a lot of young people in my position worry about, because we've seen our friends die. Like in the past year, I've had three or four friends die. I'm not sure where my life will go, and it might end early because of some of the stuff I've been involved in.

I also came up with *finishing my schooling and going to university or college, I want to have a career in building houses when I'm older,* and *not having an education.* I think getting an education is really important because it's hard to get a job, or get far in life without some kind of schooling. I want to be a builder because it's pretty easy and you can make good money.

I really don't want to be a bad role model on my little brother or nephew or any one. I want to *help other people stay out of trouble. Maybe just talking to other youth and tell them about myself*, and *become a better and more caring person*. I want to help people because when I was younger, there were people who wanted to help me and wanted me to do well. I didn't listen to them though. It was tough, because my dad would tell me what to do and what not to do, but mom would tell me different stuff. She wouldn't really get mad at me when I did something bad, so it was easier to do what she wanted me to do, rather than listen to my dad who would want me to follow the rules, go to school and all that stuff. So I wonder, what if someone did explain what was good and what was bad. *Or even if my mom was like, "Okay, what your brother is doing is wrong," or like, "What your friend is doing's wrong," right? Maybe I'd realize. So maybe I could be like that person for my nephew, or my little brother, or any other kid in a similar position.*

Relationships can have a big impact on you, *having a bad relationship with girlfriend or friends, and have a better relationship with my girlfriend*. Like, if you're in a bad relationship, everything is harder. But if you're in a good relationship, like one that there is respect, no arguing, cheating or lying, sticking together and having trust with each other, you are in a better

and healthier lifestyle. This applies to friendships and professional relationships too. *Like, if you're not a dependable person, you probably won't do well at your job. And even with probation and stuff too. It's like, "okay this kid's always in and out of jail, why should we trust him? Okay so he says he's going to do good this time out, didn't he say that the last ten times he was in jail*?"

Most hoped-for, most feared, and most likely. I think the hoped-for self that is most likely to happen is that I'll get *off probation*. I think it's going to happen because I'm actually motivated to do well this time, I'm really sick of being in jail. I have a lot of support too, like from my girlfriend, my family (especially my grandmother) and from some of my friends who want to become legit too. To increase the chances of getting off probation, I will need to follow the orders on my conditions so that I don't end up back in jail, or get more probation. It's tough though because there is some normal teenage stuff, like going to a movie, that I can't do because I have a 10pm curfew. The only way I can go is if I get a letter from my PO saying I'm allowed to be out, so I have to plan movies and stuff way in advance. I want to go to school, because it will help me succeed in life and it will help me do something with my time that's constructive and healthy. If I wasn't going to school, I would be walking down the street or sitting selling drugs somewhere or getting high or something like that. Spending time with friends who accept the changes I want to make will help, we will sort of peer pressure each other to do well, rather than to go rob a kid or jack a car. I also might need to say goodbye to some friends who don't want to get out of the life of crime, or at the least, make sure we have a set plan of what to do when we hang out so we don't end up bored and do something bad. I also need to stop doing drugs or drinking because I am really impulsive when I'm drunk or high, and that means I am more likely to do something bad.

The hoped-for self that I want the most is that I'll *stop doing crime and/or other things that could get me into trouble and end me up back in jail*. I want this because I want to have a healthy relationship with my girlfriend and with my family. I can't do that when I'm in and out of jail all the time. I also am just tired of being in jail; I don't want to come here anymore. I want a chance to go to school or get a job on the outs. To get out of the criminal lifestyle, I need to think twice before I act. I never plan on getting caught, and I don't even really plan on breaking the law, but it just happens. So if I think twice, maybe I'll remember what jail is like, and that I want to change, so I won't do something dumb. I also need to hang with people who want me to succeed, and who do healthy things, like play basketball or whatever. I need to follow my curfew because usually if I screw up and breach once, I'll just think, "screw it, I'm going to jail anyways, might as well go on a crime spree" and pick up new charges.

The feared for self that is most likely to happen, and the one I fear most is that *I'm scared of being in and out of jail for the rest of my life*. Because I've been coming into jail for the last four years and I spend time in jail than I do on the outs. And I don't know why. *It's like I don't think when I'm doing stuff, I just do it. I never really think, "Okay I'm going to steal this car and I'm going to end up back in jail." I don't really think that, I think, "All right I'm not going to get arrested, that wouldn't happen to me. Not this time. I'm going to do something different than last time," right.* But it's always the same thing, it's hard to break because I'm institutionalized. Being institutionalized means *being used to having a tight schedule and knowing what to do. Like, I get my meals given to me, I get told where I go and what I do and what time I get up and what time I go to sleep and pretty much when they say jump I say how high type of thing and I'm just used to that.* I've built a relationship with everybody in here, like I've just been coming here for so long and it's not good, it's like I'm used to being in here. *I feel more normal in here than I*

do on the outs. Like I feel the same way on the outs as I did my first time in jail. I feel like I don't really belong in the community, like everyone knows I'm from jail and they all think I should go back there.

When I come to jail, it pulls apart my family and it hurts my relationship with my girlfriend. I understand now that there are a lot of people who want me to do well and succeed in life. Even if I try to go legit, some people from my past who have issues with me might start causing problems and might not want to drop the beef, so I might end up doing something bad and coming back to jail. I think that if I create structure on the outs, like going to the gym, playing basketball, and going to school, it might make it easier to leave the structure of the jail and make the community a better place for me. I also need to stay away from situations that could get me in trouble, like parties or when people are planning to beat someone up or something. When I get mad, I need to do something healthy with the anger, like work out or something, and not give up hope. I need to live one day at a time, and if I do have a setback, I have to remember to look at the big picture and not give up on all the good I've done. I need to remember how bad jail is, so that I remember how much I don't want to come back.

Supports and barriers. I have two main supports on the outs, *myself and my girlfriend.* I'm a big support for myself because now I want to change and I want to do good and I'm looking forward to doing good and being able to spend time with my family and with my girlfriend. My girlfriend is a big support for me because she doesn't want me to come back to jail, she doesn't want to go through another four months without me. *Counsellors* help me because they remind me what jail is like, and how much I don't want to go there. And my *family,* now that I know that they want to support me and want me to do well, I think they'll be a big source of support for me.

The big barriers I see for myself are *if I lose my girlfriend* it will be hard not to get really angry and do something dumb, or to stop caring about doing well. *The temptation of crime, and drinking, and some of my friends* will definitely be a barrier for me. Another big one is that when I get in a *bad mood*, I need to not lose control of my thoughts and make a bad choice. I need to stay focused on the big picture.

Right before the end of the interview, I said to Kate, *you're the best counsellor.*

Summary of Chapter 4

These stories provide a voice for these seven youth to share their stories. Their accounts include the hopes and fears that they are experiencing as they near their release as well as some personal information about themselves and their lives. Some of the more common themes addressed in their stories included Jail, Family, Peers, and Giving Back/Reconnecting to the community. The next chapter outlines the across-participant analysis based on the participant interviews.

Chapter V – Across-Participant Findings

Many sources of data are incorporated into this study. The brainstorming maps, the Possible Selves Maps, the transcripts, the across-participant analysis and the ghost-written stories all contribute to the overall picture of the results. In this chapter I present and integrate the discussion of findings across participants. I begin with the Possible Selves data themes and sub-themes. I identified ten across-participant themes that are presented in Table 2 (see Appendix B), one of which (Jail) has three sub-themes, and another (Relationships) has two sub-themes.

In addition to the questions about their Possible Selves, I also asked the young people about the supports and barriers they saw that could assist or hinder their success in transitioning back into the community. The across-participant themes related to supports and barriers are found in Table 3 (see Appendix C). Although there were separate questions for Possible Selves and for supports and barriers, the youth conceptualized many of these issues as being related, and often discussed supports and barriers while discussing their Possible Selves. Thus, most of the supports and barriers themes correspond to the Possible Selves themes (e.g., Family, Peers, Drugs and Alcohol). In order to avoid repetition, where there was overlap between the Possible Selves data and the supports and barriers data, the discussion points have been combined in the Possible Selves section.

Hoped-for and Feared Possible Selves with Supports and Barriers

I begin the discussion with some overall observations regarding the pattern of selves the participants described. One point of interest is the relative balance of hoped-for and feared selves within the different themes. As seen in Table 2, it is evident that some of these themes have a roughly equal number of hoped-for and feared selves (for example, Family), some that have many hopes and no fears (for example, Work/Career), and two that have many fears but

few or no hopes (Drugs and Alcohol and Life of Crime). This latter finding is consistent with research done by Oyserman and Markus (1990), who found that youth participating in delinquent behaviour were less likely to have a balance of positive and negative selves – they had more negative selves. This was also similar to Oyserman and Saltz's (1993) study. They found that youth who were incarcerated had more negative possible selves than positive possible selves, and thus also demonstrated an imbalance of selves. Oyserman and Markus (1990) believed it was important to have a balanced sense of possible selves in order to avoid risky or deviant behaviour. They argue that for a feared possible self to be motivational, it must be paired with a hoped-for self that is realistic and can help the youth identify where/what/who they want to be, rather than strictly focusing on their feared possible self. Likewise, having only hoped-for selves is less likely to be motivating because the youth are not as aware of the possible alternatives for their future. The youth I interviewed shared a balance of possible selves in some themes but not in others, which might tie into their past (and potential for) risky and criminal behaviour. Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggest that an increase in negative possible selves may be due to the fact that youth who are involved in criminal activity might believe that positive possible selves may not be realistic or likely. Instead, these youth might try to define themselves through their criminal behaviour. In the present study for example, the Life of Crime theme has only feared selves; it seems that, few of these youth feel they can get out of this life style, though they might want to. If they feel it is unlikely that they will or can change this lifestyle, they may feel resigned to and defined by it. Oyserman and Markus (1990) emphasize that the hoped-for selves must seem achievable and possible to the youth in order to be beneficial. Adolescents need to have a skill set as well as possible selves that are personally satisfying and absorbing that can act as motivational and reinforcing resources in making the transition into adulthood (Cantor &

Kihlstronm, 1987; Greene, 1986). However, since many youth who are in custody have not experienced success in areas such as school, family or work, they may seek to define themselves in terms of lifestyles and relationships where they are recognized for their criminal, dangerous, exciting, or tough behaviour (Oyserman and Markus, 1990).

In their initial Possible Selves conceptualization paper, Markus and Nurius (1986), describe a possible self as a link between self-concept and motivation. A possible self ties how the individual sees themselves, and their social context, history and background, and where they might want to see themselves in the future as well as what they do not want to see in their future. Possible Selves are motivating, so perhaps the youth in this study utilize feared selves as motivational forces to avoid making poor choices or ending up in bad situations. Indeed, when looking at which themes and sub-themes are heavily represented by feared selves, they include Going to Adult Jail, Drug and Alcohol, Life Of Crime, and Success. It could be argued that these are the themes that have the most serious consequences. Thus, for youth who are heavily entrenched in the criminal lifestyle, as the youth in this study are, these fears are likely the foremost concerns for them, and therefore might require the most motivation to change. However, having only fears relating to these Possible Selves may not represent a lack of planning or understanding of consequences as Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggest, but instead might represent an understanding these youth have that things need to change, and in order to change, strong motivation is imperative. Therefore, they generate a strong list of feared selves that could happen, to motivate them to do everything they can to prevent these possible selves from occurring. Additional research is needed to shed more light on the factors underlying this emphasis on feared selves.

In contrast, to the feared selves emphasis, there are some themes that have only hoped-for selves associated with them. These themes included Work/Career and Giving Back/Reconnecting With Community. The majority of participants may have generated only hoped-for selves when talking about Giving Back/Reconnecting With Community (with the exception of Jarvis who had a feared self of not being forgiven) because there are few if any negative consequences associated with not giving back. These youth already live in a way that is disconnected from the larger community, and they are surviving. Therefore, there may not be fears associated with this goal (as it is their current reality), but instead, only an opportunity to improve their lives - a sense of hope around this. This is also interesting when one considers that many of these youth are already connected deeply to the criminal community. Despite this connection, many youth stated that they would be willing to disengage from this community if it meant greater success and connection in the "outs" community.

With respect to Work/Career, Oyserman and Markus' (1990) found youth who were heavily involved in delinquent behaviour did not discuss any achievement related possible selves. In contrast, the youth involved in the least amount of delinquent behaviour generated many work-related possible selves such as "getting a job". This was the third or fourth most commonly identified possible self by the two participant sub-samples demonstrating the least amount of delinquent behaviour; in contrast, it was not at all identified as a possibility for the two groups demonstrating the most delinquent behaviour. This distinction was not found in the present research, even though the participants could clearly be considered delinquent. Rather, the youth I interviewed heavily emphasized work and career hoped-for selves.

Assessing the balance between hoped-for selves and feared for selves also has implications for professionals working with youth in custody. It might be that for some of the

more severe fears and real issues these youth face, such as incarceration as an adult, feared selves are more powerful, and could serve as motivation to change their actions and beliefs. Interestingly, many of the youth in this study had hoped-for possible selves that were similar to non-criminally inclined youth in Oyserman and Markus' 1990 study. This suggests that youth who are involved in criminal or delinquent behaviour may be more similar to youth who are not involved in these behaviours in certain areas. There are more similarities than differences. This is important information to assist professionals like counsellors, social workers, and probation officers – they should not assume that youth in custody have hopes for the future that are different to non-delinquent youth. It is reassuring to know that these youth, despite their difficult and dangerous lives, are in many ways like other youth and have similar hopes for the future pertaining to their career, education, and lifestyle. They need support and skills in order to realize these positive selves.

Finally, while it is imperative to honour and respect both hoped-for selves and feared selves as important in their own right, it may also be beneficial, as Oyserman and Markus (1990) suggest, to consider that a balance between the hoped-for and feared selves might better assist youth in achieving their goals and inciting change. So for example, a support worker for these youth might help their client think about a possible hoped-for self, and then help him or her think about the corresponding possible feared self. Together, this could provide both the motivational force connected to the feared self, as well as the motivation connected to the hoped-for self. Oyserman and Markus (1990), suggest that this balance can help decrease delinquent behaviour.

Another interesting point relates to the Possible Selves process and challenges experienced by the youth in the present study. Step six of the Possible Selves Mapping process incorporates the question "Things you can do right now." This question encourages the youth to

think about concrete and specific ways to increase the likelihood of attaining hoped-for selves and avoiding feared selves. When I asked the youth in the present study what steps they could take *right now* to increase the chances of success, many struggled. They generated things that they could do in the near future, particularly soon after they were released, but few if any of their ideas were things that they would be able to do at that moment. For example, when Fiasco spoke about wanting to re-connect with his family, he knew that he would need to dedicate time to his sisters, and organize things they could do as a family in order to foster healthy relationships. Obviously though, he cannot plan activities to do with his sisters until he is out of custody. It is possible that he was not allowed phone contact, let alone visits, with his sisters while he was incarcerated. He could perhaps have written to his sisters while in custody in order to begin the process of re-connecting with them.

This was a common experience for many of the youth in custody. They were aware of many things they need to do in order to increase their chances of success, but because of the structure, safety concerns, and organization of the custody centre, the actions they can take *right now* are considerably limited. More work needs to be done to assess what resources and support will be available for these youth to help them initiate their plans *before* release even. For example, writing a letter to a sibling or working on an art project as a "hello" gift for a family member may help strengthen the youths' relationships with family and other sources of support.

Jail

Returning to jail. All seven participants made some reference to this theme, either as a hoped-for self or a feared-for self. Interestingly, there were more feared-for selves related to returning to jail – all seven youth had feared selves that related to returning to jail. Jarvis, Fiasco, Mike, and Sweet Lil' all explicitly state that they are afraid to return to custody.

Alternatively, Subway stated that he did not want to come back to jail, but adds a timeline of one month to this feared self (i.e., he is worried he will return to jail within a month). Dorito, Jarvis, and Fiasco all acknowledged fears related to doing something illegal that, in turn, could bring them back to jail. For example, one of the fears that Fiasco identified was *new charges.* Similarly, Subway noted the fear that he will be "gated." Being "gated" refers to new charges being brought forth on a youth's release day and s/he is "returned" to custody, not really having the chance to leave. In essence, the gate is being closed before it is opened.

There were four hoped-for selves related to staying out of trouble or staying out of jail. Jimbo Slice described a hoped-for s self that related to not coming back to jail unless for a good reason (such as getting a job at the custody centre). Subway and Sweet Lil' both talked about their hopes of staying out of trouble and their hopes of not returning to jail.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, it is not surprising that many of the youth spoke at length about their hopes and fears pertaining to the theme of Jail. It is a realistic concern for these youth that they will return to custody (one of the sub-themes). Indeed, StatsCan reports the recidivism rate for youth in custody is approximately 76% (StatsCan, 2006). Thus, pre-emptive discussion around youths' thoughts about returning to custody is a critical area for pre-release attention and planning.

Interestingly, in Inderbitzin's study (2009), one of her participants, Tony, discusses his fear that he may be punished for crimes he had committed years earlier. He felt he was a different person to who he was when he was locked up years ago. This sounds very similar to Subway and Jarvis's story. The reader is reminded for example of Subway's concern about being gated. In contrast, in the same study, the participant Marco explained that spending time in jail had taught him better ways to be a criminal and to make money (Inderbitzin, 2009). That

is, that continuing in this lifestyle will increase the chances of returning to custody, a concern that the youth in my research also voiced.

While it did not come up in the interviews I conducted for this study, my experience as a Youth Support worker has shown me that some youth are hesitant to leave custody. This finding was also seen in Inderbitzin's study (2009). When she followed up with some of the youth after they had been released, they admitted that they sometimes considered incarceration a viable alternative to their struggles in the community. Goffman (1961, as cited in Inderbitzin, 2009) offers another explanation for this:

> And yet it seems that shortly after release the ex-inmate forgets a great deal of what life was like on the inside and once again begins to take for granted the privileges around which life in the institution was organized. The sense of injustice, bitterness, and alienation, so typically engendered by the inmate's experience and so commonly marking a stage in his moral career seems to weaken upon graduation. (p. 72)

While it is possible that the youth may miss the custody centre, and may therefore want to return, Inderbitzin (2009) suggested another possibility. The youth in her study prepared for their release, but faced many challenges and did not feel readily accepted in their communities. Many struggled to find work, and faced continued challenges such as drug use and addiction. Inderbitzin (2009) stated that her participants "found that the maturity and respect they had worked hard to earn in the institution did not easily translate to their lives out in the community" (p. 469). These challenges can make transitioning back into the community and staying out of custody very difficult.

Probation/breaching. Four youth described hoped-for selves and feared selves relating to probation and breaching. There were five hoped-for selves and three feared selves associated

with this sub-theme. Sweet Lil', Fiasco, Jimbo Slice, and Mike hoped-for selves that pertained specifically to getting off probation. Sweet Lil' also included the hoped-for self that he would *follow [his] probation while [he's] still on probation* (meaning he would follow the orders on his probation). Some of the youth also described selves they feared relating to their probation or breaching their probation order. Jimbo Slice and Fiasco referred to breaching their probation specifically, and Jimbo Slice also mentioned following his conditions, but saw it more as a fear because he thought it would be difficult to do due to what he referred to as "police hassling."

I was not able to find research or information on the rate of breaches youth are charged with. This may be because it is somewhat up to the discretion of the Probation Officer to decide if the youth will be charged or not for breaching the conditions of their order. Furthermore, some breach charges may be dropped in court, so finding an exact number of youth who return to jail due to breaches is difficult. However, as well as identifying hopes and fears related to this sub-theme, many youth shared that they had already been incarcerated because of breaches, suggesting that this is a common occurrence for youth in custody.

Barrier – breaching. While many youth alluded to breaching in their Possible Selves Maps, three youth mentioned it specifically when discussion barriers to success. Subway stated that while he sees his PO as a support, when his PO breaches him, he views this as a barrier to success. Similarly, Mike also said that breaching was a barrier, but he stated that it was his actions that led to the breaching (rather than his PO breaching him and sending him to jail). And, as mentioned above, Fiasco and Subway also stated that when they drink or use drugs, they are more likely to breach.

When a youth breaches an order of their probation, they can return to custody. Some of the youth talked about how these breaches and coming back to custody would disrupt their lives

and would also be very discouraging. Furthermore, for each breach a youth gets charged with, it is possible they would have more probation time added. Thus, a youth's original probation sentence can increase drastically -- one breach can lead to more probation time, which can lead to more opportunities to breach, and so forth.

Going to an adult facility. Four youth shared feared selves associated with going to an adult facility. Interestingly, there were no hoped-for selves pertaining to this sub-theme, instead only four feared for selves. Fiasco, Dorito and Jarvis all shared that they were afraid of going to an adult institution. Jimbo Slice identified that he was afraid of an adult record, though in the interview he also noted that he would not like to spend time in an adult facility either.

It is also difficult to find information on how many youth in custody from B.C. or Canada will also serve time in an adult facility. This is likely because there are many different agencies, such as the Ministry of Child and Family Development and Ministry of Corrections, and many different policies in place, such as the Youth Justice Act, and Provincial and Federal legal systems of adults. However, while specific numbers are not available, researchers have called the recidivism, revocation, and recommitment of juvenile parolees "unacceptably high" (Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wange and Le, 2005). Some studies in the USA suggest that more than 90% of juvenile offenders have been arrested as adults and approximately two thirds have been sentenced to prison (Office of the Augidor, 1995).

Helgeland conducted a longitudinal study, following up with 85 youth with serious behavioural problems, examining which interventions were the most effective in lowering antisocial behaviour (2009). Between 1981 and 1984, the Buskerud Project was introduced, and was designed to examine three different alternatives to incarcerating youth. The researchers followed up with these youth between 1997 and 1998. The participants were then thirty years

old. Unfortunately, approximately nineteen percent of the thirty year olds were considered to be doing "very poorly." This meant that a person was completely integrated into drug-using and criminal environments. It was found that the participants who were institutionalized (i.e. placed in traditional residential care) are less likely to do well as adults than those how are placed in more therapeutic homes. This provides further validity to the present youths' concern about their future and the possibility of future incarceration and criminal activity.

Relationships

Family. When I interviewed the youth, all spoke of both friends and family -- either that they hoped to foster healthy relationships with friends or family, or that they were concerned that their relationship with these people would get worse or not improve. Furthermore, the participants talked about family in their lists of supports and barriers.

There were nine hoped-for selves identified by six of the seven youth that related to the theme of Family and seven feared selves. Jarvis and Dorito described hoped-for selves that were associated with helping their families. Jarvis, for example, developed the hoped-for self to *stop family members from coming to jail*. Dorito talked more about being a *good role model to her sister*. Alternatively, Mike, Fiasco, Jimbo Slice, and Subway had hoped-for selves that seemed to speak more to connecting with their families or creating a healthy relationship with them. Mike simply wrote *family (reconnect)* as a hoped-for self, relating to the fact that he hoped to meet his father after many years apart. Fiasco had a similar hope when he stated *spending more time with family*. He explained that he wanted to make up his absences to his sisters. Jimbo Slice talked about *keep[ing] relationship with sister and girlfriend*. He already felt their relationship was strong, and wanted it to stay that way. Subway has not lived with his biological family for quite some time, but hopes to *[go] home to family ([leave] foster care).*

Jarvis, Jimbo Slice, Sweet Lil' and Fiasco all described feared selves pertaining to the theme of family. Many of these seemed to fear for their families' well-being. Jarvis talks about *mom's addiction not improving, losing the people I love most,* and *mom and boyfriend's relationship not improving.* Jimbo Slice shared that he is fearful of his *grandpa's illness* and *relationship with mom not improving.* Alternatively, Sweet Lil' seemed to be most concerned with how his behaviour may be negatively impacting his family, *I really don't want to be a bad role-model on my little brother/nephew/anyone*. Finally, Fiasco was concerned about future issues, and developed the fear of *"new family conflicts"*.

Supports – family. Family members were often mentioned as a source of support for youth as they transition back into the community. Mike stated that he thought his *big brother* was a strong source of support because he offered unconditional love. In contrast, in the McCreary centre report, youth in custody generally do not report a high level of family connectedness when compared to youth who are not incarcerated (see Time Out II). However, despite this desire to be close to their family, it is difficult for many incarcerated youth to have this closeness. For example, two of the present participants had a family member in jail at the time of the interviews – this makes it difficult for professionals like Probation Officers to allow youth to associate with their family. While in jail, youth are rarely allowed visits with individuals who have a criminal record so this can significantly limit the contact that youth are allowed to have with certain family members. It is not unheard of for family members to be given a no-contact order. This leads to the youth being put in a position of wanting to connect with their family and friends, whom they view as supports, but risking being incarcerated for these choices. On the other hand, it is the responsibility of the justice system to help both the perpetrator of the crime, and society as a whole. Therefore, it is difficult for a Probation Officer

or other professional to allow contact between a youth a family member that may not be helpful and healthy for the youth and could potentially lead to further criminal activity.

The vast majority of research has shown that youth who develop serious behavioural problems have experienced difficult childhoods (Magnusson, 1988; Robins, 1966; Rutter, Giller, & Hagell, 1998; Sampson & Laug, 1993; Schultz Jorgensen, Ertmann, Egelund & Hermann, 1993; Werner & Smith, 2001). The studies document family and personal problems including insufficient care, psychological and physical violence and abuse, drug abuse by parents and siblings, and very difficult social and economic conditions in the home and neighbourhood. Many of the participants made allusions to difficult childhoods. For example, Sweet Lil' talked about the inconsistency he experienced in living with his mother who struggled with drug addiction.

Alternatively, the potential role of stable family relationships and community ties in helping to reduce re-offending amongst ex-prisoners has recently been acknowledged in several research papers and official reports (HM Inspectorates of Prisons and Probation [HMIPP], 2001; Home Office, 2004, 2006; Social Exclusion Unit [SEU], 2002; Visher & Travis, 2003). Individuals in jail without active family support during their imprisonment are between two and six times more likely to offend in the first year after release than those who demonstrate or receive active family interest (Ditchfield, 1994). A number of research studies have confirmed the relationship between strong family ties during imprisonment and better post-release outcomes (Holt & Miller, 1972; Ohlin, 1954; Visher & Travis, 2003). However, much less attention has been directed towards why and how processes of reintegration and resettlement work (Farrall, 2002; Farrall & Maruna, 2004). Certainly, little is known about the nature of any causal links between family ties and reduced recidivism and there have been few attempts to

explore "the impact of family influences on an individual's transition from prison to the community" (Visher & Travis, 2003, 99). This topic requires more investigation.

Family relationships can represent a significant potential source of social capital for individuals getting out of custody. They can provide financial and housing support when the individual is first released from custody, as well as moral and emotional support (Mills & Codd, 2008).

Klein, Bartholomew and Hibbert did a comparison of family traits between families of adult inmates and family of non-inmates (2002). They found that the families of people in custody were less connected to resources outside of the family itself, which would appear to be consistent with present participants' experience.

Thus research suggests that while the issue of Family can be a complicated one, the role of family is one that is identified by the youth as important, and worthy of further investigation.

Peers. Five participants identified six hoped-for selves related to peers. Two of these five participants and one of the other participants identified three feared selves. Jimbo Slice, Jarvis, Mike and Fiasco all developed hoped-for selves that pertained in some way to peers. Sweet Lil', Fiasco and Jimbo Slice all developed feared selves that also pertained in some way to peers. There was overlap between this theme and the family theme – possible selves and descriptions of friends and family were often discussed together.

Many youth who had hoped-for selves related to peers mentioned their goal of making new friends, or getting a group of friends who were not involved in crime. Mike and Jarvis specifically identified making new friends, and acknowledged they would like these friends to not be involved in crime or on probation, but instead going to school and doing "normal" things. Similarly Jimbo Slice and Fiasco talk more specifically about *make[ing] friends with people who*

are not in and out of jail (Jimbo Slice) and *meeting positive people to set me on a positive lifestyle* (Fiasco). Mike also spoke about wanting to get a girlfriend who was not involved in crime, as he thought this would be a big motivation for him to avoid crime himself. Similarly, Jimbo Slice talked about wanting to keep the healthy relationship he has with his girlfriend. Sweet Lil' also talked about his girlfriend, and stated that he was fearful he would have a bad relationship with his girlfriend, or his friends. Fiasco stated that his concern was that he would continue to spend time with the same group of friends he has been associating with, because this often leads him to do illegal things. Finally, Jimbo Slice stated that he was fearful of *death of friends*.

Similar to the thoughts put forth by the youth in this study, youth in Inderbitzin's study (2009) also stress that they understand their chances of success were likely be tied to getting out of their old neighbourhood and making new friends, but they generally did not know how to do this. Unfortunately, the only friendships that seemed to survive involvement with the juvenile justice system and remain readily available outside of the walls may be with deviant peers (Johnson, Simons, & Conger, 2004). However, if, for example, two youth commit an offence together, they are often given a *no-contact* order on their probation order. This means that if these youth connect in the community, they can be breached and end up back in jail. Peers play a critical role in the development of any adolescent, and the youth in this study also discussed their peer's influence on their lives. The impact of deviant peers on youth has been shown to be strong, and often times if a youth is involved with deviant behaviour, their peers are also (Ardelt & Day, 2002). Youth who associate with peers who engage in risky behaviour (e.g., Dision, Capaldi, Spracklen, & Li, 1995; Patterson, Dision, & Yoerger, 2000; Vitaro, Brendgen, & Tremblay, 2000) and youth who spend relatively large amounts of time socializing with peers

without adult supervision (e.g., Flannery, Williams, & Vazsonyi, 1999; Galambos & Maggs, 1991; Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001) are at risk for the development of problem behaviour over time. Chapple (2005) found that youth who had poor self-control were often rejected by peers, and this tended to lead to these youth associating with delinquent peers.

Interestingly, no research I found discussed the desire my sample expressed to find a healthier peer group.

Supports and barriers – friends, family and professionals. All seven youth identified their family, friends and professionals as a source of support when they transition back into the community. In the Possible Selves discussion, the youth discussed family and friends as separate themes, however when discussing supports and barriers, these two sub-themes were linked. For this reason, Family and Friends is discussed below together, and professionals, which was identified as separate support and barrier discussion piece, is discussed later.

Family and friends. Subway, Jarvis, Fiasco, Mike, Jimbo Slice and Sweet Lil' all said that their family support them and want them to succeed legitimately. Dorito identified a friend who supports her choice to change her lifestyle and stop committing crime. Sweet Lil' also said his girlfriend was a huge support for him, and Fiasco and Mike both said they thought getting a girlfriend who was not involved in crime would be a support for them to succeed.

As adolescents explore their social settings and spend more time away from their parents, peer influences play an increasingly important role in youths' psychosocial development (Brown, 2004). Steinberg, Chung & Little (2004), argued that relationships with prosocial peers, in particular, are important in three different but interrelated respects. First, the normative pressures in prosocial peer groups lead adolescents toward adult-approved activities and deter

them from antisocial behaviour. Sweet Lil' makes reference to this in his interview when he says that he and his friends can "peer pressure" each other into doing positive or healthy things, rather than illegal dangerous things. Secondly, social support in prosocial peer groups also accentuates the beneficial effect of social support at home and compensates for family relationships that are not sufficiently supportive. This might be particularly true for the youth in the present interview who all shared some difficulties or conflicts within their families. Finally, the quality of intimate friendships with prosocial peers contributes to adolescents' mental health and adjustment in its own right. This third aspect was evident here in that some of the present participants could clearly articulate that more positive peer relationships would be helpful to their own well-being.

At the same time, however, several participants acknowledged that their (current) peer groups were also a barrier to success, because many of their friends participate in crime and often encourage them to commit crimes.

Jarvis also spoke about having to say goodbye to peers who are still staying in the criminal lifestyle, and he thought this would be difficult. Alternatively, Sweet Lil' stated that if lost his girlfriend, he thought this would be an obstacle to him succeeding. This situation presents a major challenge for these youth – how can they access support from peers and family yet avoid the criminal aspects.

Professionals. All seven of the youth also mentioned different professionals that they see as being supportive in the community. Four of the youth thought that their ISSP workers were supports in the community. Jarvis, Dorito, Sweet Lil' and Subway all said that their counsellors provided a supportive and safe place to talk about their feelings. Dorito said that having a counsellor helped her drink less, which usually led to her committing fewer crimes or breaches. Subway stated that his counsellor feeds him, something he appreciates.

Dorito, Mike and Subway also said their Social Workers assisted them with day-to-day needs and necessities like clothes and food. Mike also said that his Social Worker helped him reconnect with his father on the mainland, and Dorito said her Social Worker works hard to find resources and opportunities for her.

Subway, Jimbo Slice, and Dorito named their Probation Officers as supports. Dorito stated that her PO very much wants her to succeed and has a plan to help her get off probation by her eighteenth birthday. Subway acknowledged that his PO wanted him to learn from his mistakes, which he sees as a supportive measure.

Desistance studies have shown that it is characterized as a progression from offence-free periods in the course of a criminal career to a point at which a person begins to assume the identity of a law-abiding citizen (e.g. Maruna, 2001; Maruna & Farrall, 2004). The research highlights the importance of significant others, such as probation supervisors, in helping to sustain motivation, overcome obstacles and resist pressure to revert to a criminal life style (e.g. Rex, 1999; Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Robinson, 2005). Continuity within a one-to-one relationship can support an offender's own efforts to overcome "setbacks and disillusionment" (Maguire and Raynor, 2006: 28–9). The present research also highlighted that while the support to change is necessary, many of the youth stressed that the assistance these professionals give in accessing basic needs, like food and clothing, are important and not to be overlooked. By meeting these basic needs, the youth will likely be more able to focus on other issues, such as getting out of the criminal lifestyle.

Drugs and Alcohol

Drugs and alcohol appeared on four of the youth's Possible Selves Maps, related to both hoped-for and feared selves

Only Jimbo Slice described both hoped-for and feared selves -- he stated that he hoped to *control [his] drug and alcohol use* and avoid *smoke weed/drinking (lose motivation)*. Jarvis, Dorito and Fiasco had feared selves: Dorito said she was fearful of *drinking again or might start using drugs*, Jarvis wanted to *avoid drugs/gang scene* as a feared self, and Fiasco simply identified *drugs as* a feared self.

Supports and barriers – drugs and alcohol. This theme also appeared in both the responses describing supports and barriers. Youth talked about programs such as NA that would assist them in learning how to control and monitor their drug use. Alternatively, every one of the youth recognized drugs or alcohol being a barrier to success because of the associated lifestyle, the impact that drugs and alcohol have on their motivational levels, and because drinking or using drugs can be a breach of their probation and therefore lead to them coming back to jail. These fears are mirrored in Inderbitzin's research (2009), in which Alex explained that he had resigned himself to the fact that he would probably return to selling drugs when he was in the community. It was the one occupation that he knew he would be paid.

Other researchers have found that often drug use is often associated with recidivism rates in young offenders (Belenko & Dembo, 2003; Huebner, Bynum & Varano, 2007), thus, this is a critical area to address in release planning. Programs that are established for adult offenders, have been shown to be ineffective with young offenders (Kushner, 2000). However, an alternative approach to jail time is sentencing youth is drug court (Parnham & Wright, 1998), a program that provides structure, psycho-education about drug use, and is geared to those who do not necessarily see themselves as people with drug problems - similar to the participants in this study. Drug court is designed to address the correlates of adolescent substance abuse at the individual (e.g., development of drug refusal skills), family (e.g., improving parental discipline),

school (e.g., enhancing school performance), and community (e.g., involvement in prosocial activities) levels (Parnham & Wright, 1998). These programs also use tools such as regular drug screenings and reward systems that are consistent with well-documented principals of behaviour change. There has been some evidence that these programs do help decrease drug use in young offenders (Dickie, 2000; Henggeler, Halliday-Boykins, Cunningham, Randall, Shapiro & Chapman, 2006). Also, treatment and prevention has been shown to be more effective than custodial sentences in reducing drug related crime (NACRO, 1999). These findings suggest that assisting young offenders in dealing with their drug and alcohol issues can be beneficial for both the young person, and for the court system and community at large.

Education

All seven youth shared hoped-for and feared selves that relate to their schooling or education -- mostly of the hoped-for selves pertain to attending and finishing high school. Dorito, Jarvis and Sweet Lil' spoke about the possibility of not just finishing high school, but also perhaps going onto college or university. Subway hoped he would *have enough patience for school*. There were two feared selves reported in this theme -- to *not have an education* (Sweet Lil') and *not graduating high school* (Jimbo Slice).

School failure and peer difficulties have been shown to be important correlates of later offending behaviour (Farrington, 2005; Hinshaw, 1992). Learning disabilities and low academic achievement are common among young offenders (Allerton et al., 2003; Ashkar & Kenny, 2009; Farrington, 1995; Kenny et al., 2006; Maguin, Loeber, & LeMahieu, 1993; Shochet, Dadds, Ham & Montague, 2006; Vermeiren, De Clippele, Schwab-Stone, Ruchkin & Deboutte, 2002). It is also argued that academic difficulty can result in youth becoming frustrated and seeking compensation through illegitimate means (Hirschi, 1969; Salmelainen, 1995).

For whatever reasons, the participants in this study shared many hoped-for selves pertaining to their academic future, and would like to complete high school. They did not focus on any difficulties with school. Many of the youth acknowledged that education could be a means to gaining better work or career opportunities.

Work

All seven participants described hoped-for selves related to work or a career -- interestingly, there were no feared selves in this theme. Some youth identified a specific career; Sweet Lil' described *building houses* and Jimbo Slice wanted to be *a welder*. Dorito tied getting a job to paying for rent, food, and survival. Jarvis thought that perhaps he could be a *counsellor*; he described his possible future work as not just a way to survive, but as a way to be "successful".

There is limited research on career development or career planning with youth who have criminal backgrounds. However, there have been studies of adult offenders and employment, particularly in connection with reducing recidivism. The relationship between unemployment and high rates of re-offending is well established (Crow, Richardson, Riddington, & Simon, 1989; May, 1999; McGuire, 2002; Simon & Corbett, 1996). Offenders are much more likely than non-offenders to have experienced long-term unemployment (Mair & May, 1997). In one report, over two-thirds of individuals in custody in England were unemployed at the time of imprisonment (SEU, 2002); three-quarters of people in English jails did not have paid employment to go to on release (Home Office, 2004). The reasons for this low employment level can be related to the impact that a criminal record may have on trying to find a job, to a general lack of employable skills (McMahon, Hall, Hayward, Hudson, & Roberts, 2004), and to

other barriers, such as homelessness, unhealthy relationships with drugs, or health issues (Fletcher, Woodhill, & Herrington, 1998; Metcalf, Anderson, & Rolfe 2001).

Farrall and Bowling (1999) maintain the choice for an individual to stop committing crimes is a combination of both the individual's choice and wider social forces. Forming new social bonds through work can create a "stake in conformity" - a more normal life. Furthermore, the individual needs to feel that they have acquired something that they value more highly than any benefits derived from a criminal lifestyle (Burnett & Maruna, 2004; Farrall, 2002; McNeill & Maruna, 2008). If securing employment does initiate a re-evaluation of a person's life it is likely to trigger a readiness to adopt a new value system and a pro-social identity, which, in turn, may result in long-term avoidance of crime (Farrall, 2002; Maruna, 2001).

Wilson, Gallagher, and MacKenzie (2000) conducted a meta-analysis of research examining the effectiveness of different educational, vocational, and work-programs; they found that those who participated were more likely to be employed and less likely to recidivate than non-participants. Educational programs appeared more effective than work-programs, which has direct implications for young offender populations.

The Possible Selves Mapping process has been used in other contexts, such as with youth in rural communities, to assist youth to examine future careers (Marshall, Guenette & Morely, 2007; Shepard & Marshall, 2003). The successful adaptation of the process in the present study bodes well for further research with youth in custody related to education and career goals and strategies.

Success

To some degree, all seven participant youth are talking about success in relation to their possible selves —work, family connections, education, staying out of jail, and so on. However,

three participants spoke of particular selves related to success and therefore, these constitute a specific theme. Jarvis created a hoped-for self that he described as *mov[ing] forward with life.* Mike stated that he was fearful of being unsuccessful. Dorito was more specific, and shared that she was afraid she would *fail goals made for myself* and *have someone ruin my goals.*

Although a number of writers discuss the concept of "success" in connection to youth in custody (Hollin, 1994; Holsinger & Anspach, 2002; Steinber, Chung, & Little, 2004; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Worling & Curwen, 2000), success relates to either successful treatment or to decreasing recidivism rates. I was unable to find any research in which the incarcerated individual was asked about *their own* concept of what "success" would look like.

The youth in this study were asked what their idea of a successful release would be. All of them said that "staying out of jail" would be part of a successful release, but they also offered other aspects of what they would consider success, such as going to school, getting work, staying in touch with family, and reconnecting with their community. This is something other research seems to have ignored and requires more investigating.

Interestingly, none of the youth discussed wanting to be a "successful" criminal. None stated, for example, that they wanted to successfully join a gang, or gain higher status within the criminal world. In fact, Sweet Lil', a participant who has spent a considerable amount of time in custody explained,

> *Like no one's a perfect criminal right, so you just can't always be a criminal for the rest of your life right? So...like it's not about not getting caught it's about not doing crime because you can get caught right?*

One youth in particular, Subway, stated that while he did not want to come back to jail, he was not sure he was ready to leave the criminal lifestyle. He said that he found criminal life

exciting, and he thought that stopping these activities could make life boring. Similarly, Kody, a participant in Inderbitzin's 2009 study, claimed to need the adrenaline he got from engaging in illegal activities.

Although there could be many reasons why Subway was less committed to changing his ways, I would argue that it could relate to it being Subway's first time in jail. Five of the other youth, (Fiasco, Sweet Lil', Jimbo Slice, Dorito, and Mike) have all been in custody more than once, many of them numerous times over at least the last 2 years. Youth who have been in and out of custody for longer, or who have served longer sentences, likely have a different perspective of what being in jail means. For example, they may have more insight into the costs of being in jail, and thus may define success as never returning to custody again. Perhaps Subway's effort to attach a timeline to his hope of staying out of jail (one month) is a realistic attempt at acknowledging that changing behaviours, especially if one is not committed to doing so, can be difficult. Alternatively, perhaps Subway feels ambivalent towards the idea of changing his ways, and does not feel any motivation or desire to change.

The notion of self-efficacy Bandura, 1997) provides yet another lens for viewing the participants' behaviours, choices and beliefs. As Bandura explains it, those who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to put in a stronger effort, be more perseverant and more resilient. Therefore, the youths' own concepts of their self-efficacy – their ability to accomplish their goals -- will influence their attempts to attain success. If, for example, Dorito believes that she has the ability and resources to achieve her goals, she would be more likely to persevere in reaching those goals and would make choices to ensure the greatest chance of succeeding in her goal setting, such as not associating with certain peers she perceives as trying to *ruin her goals*.

Supports – programs, structure, others, and themselves. The youth did not explicitly link programs, structure and themselves to the theme of success, but these supports are related to their hopes of being successful upon release. For this reason, I have discussed these supports and barriers in relation to the theme of Success. All seven youth mentioned different kinds of programs that they think would be helpful to them when they are released.

Programs. Fiasco said that Narcotics Anonymous would also be beneficial as it might help him manage his drug use and introduce him to healthy people. He also identified a work skills program he thought would both give him new skills and be a healthy way to spend his time. Similarly, Subway did not think that Coastline (an outdoor survival program) would be helpful, but he hoped to do a landscaping program that would give him skills that he could make a career.

Dorito and Jarvis were both planning to go to the same program upon release, and believed it would assist them not just with drug use or work skills, but also independent life skills.

Mike, Fiasco, Dorito and Jimbo Slice observed that the Intensive Support and Supervision Program (ISSP) had been useful because the ISSP workers had helped with basics, such as transportation to and from meetings with professionals, or other appointments. In fact, in Mike's case, his ISSP worker had found him a job for when he is released. Dorito also shared that her ISSP worker had offered to be a tutor for her when she returns to school in the community.

Sweet Lil' stated that he thought that doing the Possible Selves Mapping Process was helpful and would provide a support for him when he is released.

Much research on ways to decrease the recidivism rates of young offenders looks at different programs that are offered to individuals involved in the justice system (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990; Gendreau & Ross, 1981; Lipsey, 1992). Community based rather than prison programs were found to have higher reductions in recidivism. Characteristics associated with the most successful community based programs included: social learning emphasis, facilitation of pro-social skills, behavioural orientation, and outreach to offenders' communities.

In addition to these factors, Coulson and Nutbrown (1992) argue that it is important to examine not only what procedures are effective under what circumstances but also what procedures are effective under what circumstances for *which clients*. They suggest several components necessary for an effective program. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) programs have been effective for reducing the recidivism of juvenile and adult offenders (Lipsey, Chapman & Landenberger, 2001; Lipsey & Landenberger, 2005; Pearson, Lipton, Cleland, & Yee, 2002; Wilson, Bouffard & MacKenzie, 2005).

As described earlier, Helgeland (2009) conducted the Buskerud Project, a longitudinal study of eighty-five youth with serious behavioural problems, examining which interventions were the most effective in lowering antisocial behaviour. The project examined three different alternatives to incarcerating youth: establishing counselling services for municipalities, reinforced local initiatives (parent support for youth living at home), and the new start initiatives (3 specialized foster homes providing 24-hour care). The researchers followed up with the participants after fifteen years meaning the original participants were over thirty years old. Approximately three quarters of the female participants and about half the male participants were living lives traditionally viewed as satisfactory. Neither they nor their friends or family members were engaged in criminal activities or using drugs, and they owned or rented their own homes.

About 12% were referred to as having "a foot in each camp" -- the person had friends or family living "ordinary" lives, but also had friends and family participating in drug use or criminal associations. This group needed continuous support to maintain an adjusted "ordinary" lifestyle. Participants who were institutionalized (i.e., placed in traditional residential care) fared worst of all. The results suggest that spending between one and four years in a reinforced foster home or treatment collective seems to give young people struggling with addiction or with delinquent behaviour a chance to get onto a positive track. Helgeland asserts that having the opportunity to form relationships with adults in a family-like setting was the most effective intervention.

Structure. Mike, Sweet Lil', and Jimbo Slice all stated that some form of structure in their day and in their lives would be supportive. Both Mike and Sweet Lil' mentioned the concept of being institutionalized, and perhaps this is where the idea of structured support comes from. All three young men stated that sports or the gym might help them create that structure. Mike also stated that getting a job would create structure in his day.

I could not find any research that specifically discussed the importance of structure, routine or discipline in the lives of youth in custody to help them succeed. However, it is peripherally discussed in some studies. For example, Coulson and Nutbrown (1992) state that required structured activity is a characteristic of successful programs for incarcerated individuals (p. 205). It could also be argued that many programs that offer incarcerated individuals work training could be offering a type of structure that is similar to having a job. If an individual is expected to be at their place of work, and have an understanding of what their job entails, these expectations can lead to a type of structure that can assist the individual in succeeding in the community, as well as providing a source of money and a living.

Others. Certainly, the youth in the present study wanted stable and on-going relationships with supportive adults – family members preferred. As mentioned previously, many of the youth identified family members as a source of support. Overall the youth believed these family members wanted them to be legitimately successful. Both Jimbo Slice and Sweet Lil' noted that they thought of their girlfriends as sources of support and greatly valued their relationships. ISSP workers, Social Workers, and Probation Officers were also identified as sources in support for these youth to become successful.

Themselves. Jimbo Slice and Sweet Lil' stated that they thought that they themselves were the biggest supports they had. Jimbo Slice stated, *I'm my main support*, meaning his decisions are the most important to his success. Sweet Lil' also thought he was his biggest support.

I was unable to locate any literature that discussed young offenders seeing themselves as being supports for their success. While only two of the seven youth identified themselves as a support, it suggests an understanding that they have some control and authority over their lives and success. This concept has implications for our understanding of identity and relates to self-efficacy, because it suggests that some youth who are in custody see themselves as empowered and capable of changing their present situation. More in depth research to examine this idea is needed.

Independence

Three youth described Possible Selves that related to independence -- five hoped-for selves and three feared selves. Dorito stressed independence in her story and on her Possible Selves map. She identified three hoped-for selves that included *independence*, *get my own place* and *be independent and not have to depend on anyone else*. Jimbo Slice also mentioned that he

would like to *live independently* upon his release, and mentioned he hoped to *own a car* by the time he was eighteen years old. Subway also said he wanted a *car* in the future.

Dorito offered a feared self that pertained to having to depend on other people – she did not want *to have to depend on someone looking after me my whole life*. Sweet Lil' did not have any hoped-for selves that were related to the theme of independence but he did have two feared selves: *not be able to look after myself* and *I'm scared of being in a struggle for health, for money, for anything, because that's how I was raised – in a struggle*.

It is not surprising that adolescent youth would talk about the concept of independence. During these years, adolescents typically take on more mature roles and learn how to be contributing members of society (Steinber, Chung, & Little, 2004). These capacities are epitomized in a concept called *psychosocial maturity* (Greenberger, 1984) and require development across three important domains: (a) mastery and competence; (b) interpersonal relationships and social functioning; and (c)self-definition and self-governance (Steinberg, 2002). Of these three domains, self-definition and self-governance is the most relevant to the discussion of independence -- success in this domain is defined by independence and the ability to act in a morally positive way without supervision (Greenberger & Sorensen, 1974). However, navigating the competing goals of rehabilitation and punishment in custody is difficult and can adversely impact the psychosocial maturity of incarcerated youth (Steinberg, Chung, & Little, 2004). Thus, more needs to be done to assist these youth in establishing the tools they need to be independent members of society.

Life of Crime (L.O.C.)

I learned from the youth at the custody centre that the term "Life of Crime" is not one universally recognized in the "crime community" -- but it is a term used by youth in Victoria

who are associated with the criminal lifestyle. This term also exists in relation to a lifestyle and "addiction" to crime. However, Life of Crime (L.O.C.) in this context refers specifically to the culture and lifestyle associated with crime. This culture includes specific rules, social norms, language, and hierarchy. The L.O.C. theme was referred to by three of the youth in this study, but included eight feared selves. Fiasco was concerned about developing "new beefs" upon release. The term "beef" refers to conflicts or a serious disagreement. He was also fearful about dying -- he shared that he has come close to death before because of his criminal lifestyle. Sweet Lil' also was concerned about *dying young* because he has lost many friends over the last year, mostly related to their criminal involvement (i.e., drug use, violence, etc.). Jarvis shared the most fears relating to the theme of L.O.C.. Among these were *going back to old ways*, *revenge*, *karma*, *leaving a gang and not suffering the consequences*, and *change who I am (new way of thinking)*. He felt that changing his criminal lifestyle would likely have adverse consequences for him and that it would be difficult to learn a new way of being in the world.

Barriers - Repercussions of L.O.C.. Three youth commented on how their "Life of Crime" is likely to continue to negatively impact them in the future. Jimbo Slice and Jarvis stated that they were concerned that their reputation with the police will likely make success harder, as the police will likely watch them more closely and be more strict with them. Similarly, Jarvis also said that he was concerned that he would get charged for crimes he committed in the past, and this would lead him back to jail and then to lose hope. As mentioned above, Jarvis also spoke about the difficulty he would experience in saying goodbye to his peers who are not changing their lifestyle.

Fiasco had an interesting point that it was possible that the peers he associated with the past may not understand that he is hoping to change. Therefore, if he has "beef" with one of

them, they may not "drop the beef" just because Fiasco is no longer involved in crime. This puts him in a difficult position because he may not want to engage with these peers, but will struggle to avoid this conflict. Jarvis also said that changing his gang mentality will be difficult to do, and will be an obstacle in his future.

There is little research done on the Life of Crime and this may be due to the fact that it would be a difficult topic for researchers to gain access to. However, there have been initiatives developed by individuals involved in the L.O.C. to address this barrier. Criminals and Gangmembers Anonymous (CGA) is an organization that is based on the Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) twelve-step model (CGA in ABC Nightline, 2009). CGA was developed by Richard Mejico, an individual who is serving a life sentence in Mule Creek State Prison. Richard worked the AA steps, but despite this, felt more needed to be done to help him. CGA seeks to address the "lifestyle" addiction, and people who work this program believe that change is possible if given a chance. This program could be an opportunity for individuals in the L.O.C. to find support and skills to deal with their lifestyle and it's ramifications.

Physical Health/Wellness

This theme has three hoped-for selves and five feared selves that were developed by four of the participants.

Jimbo Slice, Mike and Sweet Lil' all had hoped-for selves that had to do with playing sports or working out in general to get into shape.

Fiasco, Jimbo Slice and Sweet Lil' developed feared selves that pertained to an unhealthy lifestyle. As mentioned above, Sweet Lil' and Fiasco are both concerned about death and dying young. Sweet Lil' also stated *I really don't want to be unhealthy*. Jimbo Slice was more specific

about his idea of being unhealthy and stated he did not want to become *fat* both for aesthetic and health reasons.

There has been a considerable amount of work done examining the health of youth who are incarcerated. Much of this research focuses on how these youth are not healthy, both while they are in custody and while they are out. Despite the fact that the majority of youth surveyed in the McCreary report rated their health as "excellent" or "good", 72% of youth interviewed acknowledged having been diagnosed with a serious condition, including "anger problems", ADHD, addiction issues, learning disability, depression, FAS, bipolar, schizophrenia, panic disorders and epilepsy. Many of these youth experienced more than one health condition and many reported having a physical disability or condition that limit their activities compared to youth in community. Furthermore, in another survey, youth who were involved in the court system reported high rates of accidents and injuries, admissions to hospitals, and emotional and peer relationship difficulties (Anderson, Vostanis and Spencer, 2004).

While the youth in this study shared some hopes about their health and overall wellness, Anderson, Vostanis and Spencer argue that there are issues within the culture of the jail which makes it difficult for youth to be active and knowledgeable participants in their health-care (2004). For example, Armstrong, Hill and Secker found that adult terms, such as "mental health" were unclear to children or adolescents (2000). There was also a considerable amount of stigma attached to many mental health issues, thus leading to misunderstandings and youth who were not comfortable sharing their problems with others. Dimond, Misch and Goldberg also found that youth in custody were discouraged from expressing their feelings, and were encouraged to be a "strong" person, by withholding their problems (2001).

As well as there being a general lack of understanding around youth in custody, and their

perceptions of health and well-being, there is some evidence that youth in custody do have ideas that could assist them in improving their health. Similar to what the participants in this study shared, youth who participated in McCreary's "Voices from the Inside" project (2007) also said that more physical activities, such as dance class, would be appreciated while in custody. Also, many youth at the Victoria custody centre have shared with me that they would like to have access to a gym with weights and other exercise equipment (the custody centre in Burnaby has such a gym).

Unfortunately, Subway and Fiasco's fears around death, and dying young do seem to be a valid concern. It is replicated by Kody's story, who had death threats hanging over his head even while he was in custody (Inderbitzin, 2009).

Other

Five participants described unique selves that did not fit into any of the other themes – these are listed in Table 2 under "Other". Jarvis stated that he hoped to travel the world. Mike wanted to get more tattoos. Subway dreamed of winning the lotto, and Fiasco hoped to continue *counselling and therapy to help [him] choose right decision*. The only female participant, Dorito was concerned about getting pregnant before she was ready.

Supports and barriers - Other

There were some supports and barriers that were identified and unique to the participants. They were not mirrored in the Possible Selves themes, and do not fit into any other category. For this reason, I report them as standalone supports and barriers.

Jarvis and Subway described two supports that did not fit into any other theme. Jarvis thought that *Indigenous ceremonies* related to forgiveness would be supportive because they would make him feel better about some of the bad choices he has made in the past. Subway also

said that spending the last *four months in jail* is actually a support because it has taught him about jail and this lifestyle, and showed him that he may not want this in his future.

Fiasco, Sweet Lil' and Jarvis all identified barriers that do not fit into any other themes. These included *temptation* (Sweet Lil'), learning to manage money in a legitimate way (Fiasco), and guilt trips (Jarvis).

Young people often describe unique possible selves that are part of their particular personal and cultural experience (Marshall & Guenette, 2011). In this particular study, many of the possible selves were particular to youth being in custody, such as a hoped-for self that gets off probation. Likewise, Jarvis refers to his Indigenous culture as a way to attain his hoped-for self relating to forgiveness. The youth's context cannot be removed from their present position, nor can it be ignored when they consider their future.

Emerging Theme

Interestingly, three youth identified a total of ten possible selves that related to the concept of Giving Back/Reconnecting with the Community.

Dorito described a hoped-for self that she would be respected again in her community. Sweet Lil' had two hoped-for selves including, *help others stay out of trouble. Maybe just talking to other youth and tell them about myself* and *become a better and more caring person*. Finally, Jarvis established the most hoped-for selves in his interview and on his maps, and these included, *getting forgiven*, *change kids on the streets to legit ways of thinking, help out kids who live in poverty, be successful in helping kids in community, help people who helped me* and *forgive people.*

Jarvis was the only youth to describe a feared self that pertained to reconnecting with his community. He feared that he would never be forgiven for the things he had done. He

understood it might be impossible for him to be forgiven for all of the things he did, but he still very much wanted it.

Because less than 50% (three of the seven) of the youth identified possible selves related to Giving Back/Reconnecting with the Community, it did not meet the criteria to be a theme. However, I think this area is worth more investigation, and this is discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

Summary

Across-participant analysis highlights the similarities and differences in participants' lives, interactions with the system, and aspects of their lifestyles associated with their criminal activity. Interestingly, some of the supports and barriers also tied in with the possible selves the youth developed, while others did not. In the concluding chapter, I will outline the implications of these findings for practice, policy, and future research.

Chapter VI - Summary and Implications

In this chapter, I summarize and discuss the most important research findings, along with implications of the research, limitations, how this study contributes to research knowledge, and future research options. I also outline the implications for professionals who work with these youth, and for policy makers who make decisions that greatly impact these youth. Finally, I will share my own personal learning as a researcher.

Possible Selves Theory

Markus and Nurius' (1986) Possible Selves theory was both an effective and appropriate framework for the study. The concepts were easily understood by the participants and the concrete mapping application (Marshall & Guenette, 2011) yielded rich and detailed data. The notion of hoped-for and feared selves seemed particularly relevant for the six of the seven youth who hope to stop their criminal activity and are attempting to "re-author" their lives and make significant and substantial changes. The theory provided both an explanation of their situation and a method for exploring options and potential actions.

Most of the eleven themes identified in the across participant analysis of possible selves, including Jail, Drugs and Alcohol, and Peers, were expected. The youth shared hoped-for selves related to family and a new peer group, along with programs and professionals that could assist them in their release process. They described specific goals and the ways they hoped to pursue those goals. At the same time, they all recognized the challenges involved in staying out of jail while being on probation, and more specifically, avoiding breaches of their release conditions. The youth also talked about how drugs and alcohol, along with some of their peer group, could

decrease their chances of success. The long-term ramifications of their criminal lifestyle also were identified as being a barrier for these youth to successfully transition back into the community. They described the conflicts related to wanting to avoid crime, yet being strongly connected to peers and a culture that would make this difficult.

The theme of Giving Back/Reconnecting with Community, however, was somewhat surprising. I had not expected to have the youth discuss their desire to give back and reconnect to their community. In my work at the custody centre, I rarely hear the youth discuss concepts such as forgiveness or teaching other youth lessons that they have learned, but both of these hopes appeared in this theme. There is considerable literature and research on the concept of restorative justice, but I could find no literature discussing the desire of youth in custody to give back to their community.

Possible Selves Mapping Process. When I first began thinking of a research topic for my thesis, I was already familiar with the Possible Selves Mapping Process. I had been a research assistant of Dr. Marshall's the year prior to starting graduate school, and began to think of the possibilities of using the mapping process with youth who were in custody. I was also curious about the transitions that youth in custody experience. Leaving the jail was one transition that many youth had already talked with me about, and I realized it was an area that needed to be examined more closely.

As my research ideas developed, I realized that the Possible Selves Map would be a tool that could assist the youth in telling their story in a non-threatening context, and would also provide structure and safety for the youth. Their hopes and fears are contained on the paper, meaning that some of these difficult thoughts and feelings were also contained. The most important part of this process for me was to allow the youth to share their story. That being said,

I was aware that there was the possibility that the youth would tell too much of their story, and possibly implicate themselves or share information that was very personal and not related to the research question. I also felt that the mapping process was a way that would allow the youth to share their story but would allow me the ability to structure the process to stop the youth from sharing information that would be damaging or unhelpful.

With my desire to hear the stories of these youth, I originally planned to follow an open narrative methodology. However, I was also aware that the open nature of narrative design could be problematic with these youth. I did not want them to "over-share" and talk about situations or information that could be damaging or incriminating. Therefore, I utilized a narrative influence when asking youth about the supports and barriers they perceived. Interestingly, it was not until I conducted the interviews that I realized that an average adolescent does not often talk at length when asked a personal question, and the youth in my study were no different. They often responded with one-word answers, and instead of ensuring the youth did not over-share, I found I was probing and encouraging them to explain and add detail to what they were saying.

Using ghostwriting (Rhodes, 2000) allowed me a chance to connect deeply with the stories the youth shared, while at the same time acknowledging the subjectivity I have as a researcher. I found the process exciting but difficult as I tried too hard to stay "true" to the interview at the cost of creating a fluid story. I do believe, however, that presenting the stories in this fashion is going to have a powerful impact on the readers.

While the Possible Selves Mapping Process has not been used specifically in a custody setting to my knowledge, my findings are consistent with much literature surrounding Possible Selves research involving "delinquent" youth (Oyserman and Markus, 1990; Oyserman and

Slatz, 1993). However, there is not much literature which focuses on the youth's own perspective and what it is that they need and want in terms of release planning and for re-integration into their home communities. What was highlighted in this study is the depth and detail of the hoped-for and feared selves. The hopes and fears identified are very real for these young people and is a realistic representation of what they will be facing when they return to the community. It would appear that the youth are well able to identify both hopes and fears for their future, and are aware that in order to succeed, they must try to maintain their relationships with friends and family, while at the same time turning away from drugs, alcohol and the criminal lifestyle. This navigation will undoubtedly be difficult, and the participants also acknowledged this.

The feedback I gained from the youth was very positive. Six of the seven youth read a summary of the interview and acknowledged that I understood their story appropriately. Also, six of the seven youth expressed that they enjoyed doing the mapping process, and the one youth who did not enjoy it, stated that the process was "Ok". Furthermore, Sweet Lil' stated that he thought the Possible Selves Mapping Process would be a beneficial exercise for all youth who are nearing release to participate in. This would suggest then, that the Possible Selves Mapping Process is a viable tool that can be used with youth who are in custody.

There are some minor changes that I would make to the PSMP if it were to be used again with youth in custody. One of the youth did not appreciate the word "fear". This is likely because in jail, it is not a safe to be afraid, it is not accepted in that culture. Perhaps instead asking about possible selves that were stressful, or that the youth did not want to have happen. Also, the word "barrier" was one that not many of the youth knew. They did understand the concept of "obstacle" however, and this would likely be a more appropriate term.

Limitations. It should be noted that there are limitations to this research. As with all qualitative research, the findings are not broadly generalizable, and alternative interpretations are possible. Also, there was only one young woman participant, and her experiences could be quite different to those of other female young offenders. Only having one female participant may also have been due to the small sample size of this study (n=7). However, for the purposes of this study, my Master's thesis, the sample size was feasible and appropriate.

One advantage that is potentially a limitation is my "insider" position at the custody centre. The youth decided to share with me what they did, and in turn, I chose what to include. While my knowledge of these youth, and the system added to my ability to connect with them and their story, it, along with my expectations, also may have impacted how I heard the stories. In other words, my subjectivity impacted the production of the stories, and the across-participant analysis as well.

Implications for Research

I believe that by utilizing the Possible Selves Mapping Process, as well as interview questions that focused on the youths' experiences, the participants were able to tell their stories in a safe and structured way that also allowed for flexibility. Their stories, then, I believe will contribute to the theory and knowledge research has about these youth at an in-depth level. It will also add to our understanding of broader topics, such as identity and possible selves. It will assist service providers and policy makers in understanding and hearing the voices of youth who are incarcerated and nearing release.

This study is qualitative in nature, and therefore is not generalizable to all youth in custody. However, there were a number of similarities and themes across stories that were consistent with previous research, and thus lend further support to certain concepts. To a certain extent, though,

each participant's experience was unique – this underscores the need for individually tailored treatment and release plans that take into account the young person's particular set of skills, hopes, fears, supports, strengths, and weaknesses. More research is needed to explore specific ways to assist youth who are exiting custody and re-entering their community.

Future Research

There are many areas that need future research relating to youth in custody. While there are many organizations doing ongoing quantitative work with youth who are incarcerated, more qualitative research will add to our understanding of these youths' actual experiences, goals and expectations. While there appear to be countless statistics about youth in custody and how long until/if ever, they return to custody, there is no research that I could locate that asks the youth WHY *they think* it is that they return. Undoubtedly for many of these youth, it was the first time they were asked their opinion about their hopes, their fears, and their future.

Furthermore, some of the present data contradict other possible selves findings with delinquent youth. For example, youth in this study shared many hoped-for selves pertaining to schooling and work, a finding that is contradictory to Markus and Oyserman, (1990). As mentioned previously, youth who are incarcerated often struggle with schooling (Allterton et al.. 2003; Ashkar & Kenny, 2009; Farrington, 1995; Kenny et al., 2006; Maguin, Loeber, & LeMahieu, 1993). Some also suggest that a lack of success in academia may lead them to seek compensation through illegitimate means (Hirschi, 1969; Salmelainen, 1995). Furthermore, while there is not much research on youth in custody and their career aspirations, there is a relationship between unemployment and high rates of re-offending (Crow, Richardson, Riddington, & Simon, 1989; May, 1999; McGuire, 2002; Simon & Corbett, 1996). There are also many barriers to gaining employment upon release identified, including a general lack of

employable skills (McMahon, Hall, Hayward, Hudson, & Roberts, 2004), homelessness, unhealthy relationships with drugs or health issues (Fletcher, Woodhill, & Harrington, 1998; Metcalf, Anderson & Rolfe, 2001). However, the youth in this study are very hopeful about their academic future and, in turn, their future work life. The youth stated they wanted to graduate school both as a personal goal and as a way to gain a better job. They also were able to identify possible job opportunities for the future, including construction and counselling. These findings are very different from those found in other research, particularly in Markus and Oyserman study (1990). Further research should be done to more fully explore why and where these differences exist.

Investigating the culture of crime, or Life of Crime (L.O.C.) context could shed light on what contributes to these youth's lives outside of "the system." This would be a difficult thing to explore, however I was shocked to see that, despite its familiarity to the many professionals who work with these youth, it does not appear in the empirical literature. Just as we explore people's culture and how it impacts themselves and their community, exploring the L.O.C. culture could contribute to our understanding of what leads youth and adults to commit crimes, and why it seems to make transitioning into a "legitimate" life so difficult.

Another area for future research involves the concept of goal setting. Some of the youth related the idea of possible selves to that of future goals. Dorito in particular asked if possible selves were like goals, and shared that she had many goals for her release and future. Learning more about how these youth set goals, and the challenges and strengths they have in reaching their goals, could help practitioners assist their clients with concrete ways to succeed. Also, understanding the process these youth go through in setting and achieving their goals may add to our understanding of youth in custody and their concept of self-efficacy. According to Bandura

(1997), people will set and invest in goals they believe they are capable of achieving. Self-efficacy also provides a foundation for motivation, well-being and accomplishment. Exploring the link between goal setting and self-efficacy for young offenders will add more understanding and knowledge to this area, and help inform practitioners.

Of particular interest for an area of future research involves an emerging theme that was identified from three of the interviews conducted. Giving Back/Reconnecting with the Community, had nine hoped-for selves and only one feared self. Because only three youth generated these ten possible selves, it could not meet the 50% criteria needed to be a theme. Nonetheless, I believe it is an important area to discuss and explore. Prior to starting this research, I was confident that I knew what many of the participant themes would be. I had already anticipated the themes including Jail, Drugs and Alcohol, Family, School/Education and L.O.C.. However, I was not expecting to see the theme of Giving Back/Reconnecting With Community.

At first glance, these hopes and fears may seem to be similar to the concept of restorative justice, and the courts sometimes order that some kind of restoration (compensation, apologies, etc.) be made to the victims of crimes by the offenders (see Gilman, 2011). However, it would appear that the youth in this study were not speaking specifically about restoration that is ordered by the court, nor restoration directly relating to their crimes. Instead, these youth hope to give back on a larger scale, for example, by helping others in their position, or by becoming "better" people who are more caring and giving. They also talked specifically about hoping to rebuild relationships with their communities that have been damaged through their actions. This theme of the offender themselves desiring to connect more with the community and make amends was not present in any of the research I surveyed. This finding is important because it includes many

hoped-for selves, and only one feared self, indicating that the present participants saw "giving back" as a positive future goal. Furthermore, because these youth are so estranged from their community, it is important to recognize that they do seek an attachment to their community. As Sweet Lil' said when talking about how he feels when he has tried to reconnect with the community in the past: *I feel like everybody doesn't want me out there right, it feels like, "okay this kid should be back in jail". That's how I feel when I'm out there.*

Many of the youth talked about how their actions have led them to being disconnected or disrespected by their community. Dorito stated that she hoped to *be respected again in [her]community* and explained that because of her actions, her community now thought poorly of her. Ungar, Teram, and Picketts (2001) provide two case studies of two youth who are of similar backgrounds (early trauma, removal from family, incarceration, etc.), but end up in very different places. The authors argue that the difference between the fate of these two youth relates to how connected or disconnected they were from their community. Paul was incarcerated and moved away from his community for much of his adolescence. However, Cameron was given the opportunity to remain connected to his family and community, and incarceration was only utilized for short amounts of time. By the time the article was published, Paul had been killed in a car accident and Cameron was still living in his community, attending school and working part time. The authors argue that there should be more permeability between the institution and the community at large, to maintain a connection between the youth and their community. Essentially, the institutions should be seen as an extension of the community rather than something that is entirely disconnected or disengaged from the community. Such connection would be beneficial for positive identity development and increase the chances of advocacy for the youth.

The theme of Giving Back suggests that these youth do understand that they did things that were hurtful or wrong to individuals and the community overall. The desire some of these youth voiced to reconnect to society also suggests that they value this and want to be part of the "outs" rather than being incarcerated. Little has been documented about individuals leaving custody regarding transitions, and reconnections with the community (Maruno, 2000; Travis, Solomon, & Wiel, 2000; Taxman, Young, Byrne, Holsinger & Anspach, 2002), and seemingly no investigation of this desire for giving back. This is a particularly important topic for further research in order to build our understanding and knowledge for supporting this positive goal.

Implications for Counselling Practice and Policy

As a helping practitioner working with youth in custody, I am particularly interested in how research impacts our practice. The present study offers a number of implications for practice, and also for policy makers to consider.

Service Providers. As mentioned previously, the majority of youth who participated in the mapping process found the exercise enjoyable and helpful. There were three findings that have direct implications for counselling practice.

Giving back. This finding has significant implications for both the youth who are in custody, the individuals who are involved with these youth and society as a whole. These youth are often ostracized because of their dangerous and damaging actions. Despite the fact that these behaviours are considered "anti-social", a term that suggests that they are essentially against society, it appears that at least some youth who perpetrate them want to be connected with society. This desire is helpful to acknowledge because it can help reframe how the community perceives these youth, and can assist professionals in understanding what these youth want, and how they can use it to motivate change. For example, many youth talked about wanting to help

other people who are in their situation. A professional working with these youth could suggest that these youth may want to get a job that involves helping people involved in the justice system. Getting a job helping people could assist the youth in seeking and completing their education, getting a legitimate job (meaning they may no longer be involved in criminal activity to make money), reconnecting to their community in a meaningful way, and develop a positive sense of self that does not involve illegal activities.

Life of crime, (L.O.C.). The young people involved in this study also shared that they felt there were repercussions to their criminal lifestyle. This was a barrier I had not thought of prior to starting the interviews, but I think it is an important one for people involved with these youth to be aware of. Even if these youth commit to changing their ways, there are some very challenging obstacles, such as having a poor reputation with police, or having to worry about individuals from their past coming back and seeking revenge for past altercations. These challenges are difficult to understand for someone who is not involved with the criminal lifestyle, but are still very real. Understanding that despite the fact a youth wants to change, there may be challenges to doing this, and these challenges may be dangerous. Acknowledging their fears and helping a youth acknowledge that change will not happen overnight, as well as allowing for some more drastic options, like moving away from their community to avoid conflict with peers from their past, may be useful.

Developing wraparound services in the community may help in establishing less precarious bridges to the world outside of the institution (Pullman, Kerbs, Koroloff, Beach-White, Gaylor & Sieler, 2006). Inderbitzin also stated that better job training and practical vocational skills which could translate into opportunities for employment (2009). Also, community supports and partnerships can help bridge the gap between the institution and the

community. Volunteer mentors can assist ex-offenders by providing support and guidance. For example, if an individual had served time and had been released back into the community successfully (i.e. living a "legit life" and avoiding crime), they have knowledge and experience that would be powerful and educational for youth who are in custody presently. Mike makes reference to a friend who has been in jail, but has found a new way of being. If youth who are in custody could connect with people with this insider knowledge, they may be able to be mentored in the transition period. Finally, Inderbitzin suggests allowing youth to finish their sentences at group homes where they can get jobs and earn and save money for their transition to independent lives. More opportunities for counselling should be offered to youth to assist them with the emotional toil of returning home.

Possible selves of youth in custody. While there has been research discussing possible selves with "delinquent youth", there has been no research examining the use of Possible Selves Mapping with youth who are incarcerated. Furthermore, the youth in my study shared hoped-for selves that related to themes, such as school, that were not commonly shared themes by delinquent youth in the other studies. This would suggest then, for professionals that different groups of "delinquent" youth may have different thoughts and feelings about their future.

It is important for professionals who work with youth who are incarcerated discuss goals their clients have. In particular, discussing concrete ways the youth can achieve these goals, by breaking down their goals into achievable steps, will help motivate and assist these youth. Many of the youth in this study shared that having an opportunity to talk about their future, in their own language and on their own terms. Counsellors and other helping professionals can talk with their clients about how they hope and imagine reaching their goals. Providing a space for their clients to explore these issues, as well as providing concrete assistance and guidance, can support these

youth during a difficult but important time.

Fortunately also, all but one of the youth in this study shared the hope to change their lifestyle. This is encouraging for people who work with these youth and who hope to affect change in young offenders' dangerous and damaging behaviour.

Youth who participated in this study shared hoped-for and feared selves that were unexpected. It is important for counsellors to remember that our expectations for what these youth may be facing may not be accurate, and by making assumptions, we may unintentionally dishonour the youth's experience and make it difficult for them to share with us what they are facing. It would appear that release plans are missing how to maximize success and minimize failure. For this reason, it is important to address how we can help youth face their fears and real challenges to support them in creating realistic plans to support their release. The youth are well able to articulate what they need to do and have (i.e., internal and external resources and supports), but as mentioned before, they struggle to plan things they can do *right now* to ensure future success. Furthermore, many youth talked about how breaching their probation order will likely be the reason they return to custody. Assisting these youth in identifying ways to avoid breaching, and finding alternative and healthier activities to fill their time is an important way to ensure these youth spend more time in the community. More work must be done to help these youth look at the practical steps that must be taken during their transition back into the community to increase their chances of success.

When working with youth in custody, it is imperative to remember that while much of their lives are dictated by "the system", they still have an identity separate to their present state, and are able to express and share it if given the space to do so.

Policy. Although there is considerable research about youth in custody, little of this

research is qualitative and in-depth, and very little focuses on the youths' own perspectives. I believe this lack of depth fosters assumptions and beliefs about these youth that are incorrect and thus, in turn, lead to ineffective policies and procedures. It is important that decisions made for these youth include some consideration of what these youth want and aspire to themselves. For example, youth spoke at length about "the system", and in particular, about breaching. They shared that it was a common and serious concern for their future that seemed highly likely because of the procedures and limitations placed on their release. Many also talked about the desire to get off probation, believing that if they could, the chances of them returning to custody would diminish considerably. For example, Jimbo Slice shared that he has not committed or been charged with a new crime in two years. However, he has been in custody regularly and has had his probation extended due to continuous breaches, usually curfew. Policy makers need to be aware that while holding youth accountable for their actions is important, it can also be damaging to continually incarcerate and punish youth for the mistakes they make. Should a breach of curfew merit the same punishment (incarceration) as an offence such as theft or assault? Two of the youth talk about the belief that they are institutionalized, a situation of great concern at such a young age. Butts and Mears (2001) have stated, "Get-tough policies weakened the integrity of the juvenile justice system, but growing evidence about the effectiveness of new ideas in prevention and rehabilitation may save the system yet" (p. 171). Perhaps allowing youth alternative ways to address their criminal actions, such as restorative justice, or doing community service for charges like breaches, could be beneficial. Making a youth do something positive for their community could show them another way to engage with the community at large and change their sense of identity from one of "criminal" to one of "helper". Furthermore, it could also change the *community's perception of these youth*, again changing from "outsider" to

"member of the community".

The youth talked at length about programs, particularly the ISSP (Intensive Support and Supervision Program) program, that they found to be helpful and supportive. As well as providing practical support for the youth, I also believe ISSP serves the important service of bridging the gap between custody and the community, supplying the youth with someone who understands both the jail and the community well. Continuing support and providing more programming like this can greatly assist youth in custody achieve a more successful and healthy lifestyle.

Personal Learning

This process has been without a doubt, the most difficult undertaking I have ever experienced. I struggled with many of the theoretical aspects of doing research, and felt constantly at odds trying to be a researcher in an environment where I am normally a counsellor. I was challenged to balance the insider knowledge I had, and to not let expectations overpower what the youth were sharing with me. I was also concerned that in my effort to gain more information from the youth, I would lead them, or ask them to share something that they were uncomfortable sharing. Also, I acknowledge that I am part of the research process, and have had an influence. For this reason I chose ghostwriting for presenting individual participants, a method that by definition includes the researcher in the presentation of the findings. I have worked at the custody centre for three years, and I know many of the youth on the island involved in the criminal system. I have literally watched some of them grow up, and likewise they have witnessed me grow as a counsellor and as a researcher. It would be impossible for me to not be personally engaged in the research process. I also acknowledge that I have a vested interest in this research and its implications. I believe this investment and my understanding of

the system has given me the ability to collect more in-depth data by setting the youth at ease, and by communicating with them in a familiar and accessible way. On the other hand, it is possible that the youth may have felt too familiar with me, or may have wanted to please me, and may therefore adapted their answers to be what they thought I might want to hear.

One piece of learning, though, that I found most powerful, occurred during the recruitment of my participants. I work with youth who have done incredibly violent and hateful acts towards others – many people consider them to be "bad" kids. However, when I began recruitment, I was overwhelmed with how many youth offered to be in my study. Not only did they want to share their stories, but they genuinely wanted to offer me assistance – perhaps a little like "giving back", or doing something that could lead to some good. A concrete example of this was a statement that Jarvis shared with me when I asked what kind of food he would like for his honorarium. He stated, "I don't want anything, I just want to help. You've helped me out, I want to help you out". Their selflessness and support of me was an incredible reminder of how powerful developing a relationship and directing their energy can be for these youth and for those who work with them. These youth had taught me how to be a counsellor over the last three years, and now they have taught me how to be a researcher.

Final Comments

The primary reason I began this research was to give youth in custody a voice to share their hopes, fears and thoughts about jail and release. In the spirit of this, I would like to conclude this work with a rap written by TR, a youth in custody who agreed to have his words shared.

Endless Days of Hope

Everyday I hope for a better life

Everyday I hope to do good but it feels like I'm never right

Everyday I hope to escape the sadness

Everyday I hope to get out of this cave of blackness

Everyday I hope someone will see my pain

Everyday I hope this hatred will leave my veins,

I guess that's all I can do is hope

I just pray that one day you will know

And understand all this pain that I never show

I try to catch up to the world but it feels like I'm extra slow

I'm trapped in this tunnel of darkness I see no light at the end

Everyday I woke up hopin' that I might have a friend

You can try to relate but the truth is you don't know this

Every single day I'm losin' more focus

I'm all alone livin' in these cold moments

My life is beginning to look so hopeless

It's me all alone in this small ass spot

These endless days of hope is all I got

I don't wanna wait here to die and rot

So I'm pray that the Lord'll give me one more shot!

Every day I hope that you'll get a glimpse of what it's like for me

Everyday I hope that I might be free

Of all this bullshit and the same old stress

I'm hoping I can find the strength to put this pain to rest

All of this doesn't even make any sense

Everybody thinks they know me, always takin' a guess

"Oh he's just a criminal, leave him alone"

But none of you understand what it's like to be on your own

To be criticized every single day

When someone always has a mean thing to say

Everywhere I go I'm just a little loner

Always sittin' by myself in the corner

Not a friend in sight, no one cares to see

That I'm all by myself nobody's there for me

So I turn to drugs and alcohol to escape reality

I'm livin' a tragedy, and no one even thinks it's sad to see that

It's me all alone in this small ass spot

These endless days of hope is all I got

I don't wanna wait here to die and rot

So I'm prayin' that the Lord'll give me one more shot!

So now I'm introduced to the criminal code

It almost feels like I'm gonna explode

Cuz the more I push this pain down, the more it grows

I'm in this room where the doors are closed

I'm trapped and now the walls are closin' in

I'm tryna fight a battle that I'll never win

I was born with a curse and it hasn't gone away ever since

It's always getting' worse, I need a better wish

Or a prayer, so Lord I pray that my soul is mending

I just hope you can help me finding my happy ending

Everyday I hope for another hand

Everyday I hope someone will understand

Everyday I hope for a happy life I can live

Everyday I hope for a friend I can sit with

Everyday I hope I'll find something

And everyday I wish that it wasn't me all alone in this small ass spot

These endless days of hope is all I got

I don't wanna wait here to die and rot

So I'm prayin that the Lord'll give me one more shot!

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Appendix A

Possible Selves Mapping Process Guide

For Youth at Victoria Youth Custody Services

7 STEPS IN THE PROCESS
****times are approximate – each interview will have its own unique flow****

DAY ONE

Successful Release

As you may have noticed, I'm interested in hearing what youth in jail think of their upcoming release. Before we get started, I want to ask you what you consider a successful release? Like, how do you know that your release has been/will be a good one?

Introduction to Possible Selves Mapping Process

Today I'm going to ask you to do some stuff with all of this paper. There are quite a few steps involved, but we'll go slowly and you can take a break or ask me a question whenever you like. If I don't make sense, you can totally call me on it, and I'll try to be more clear. Also, I'm going to ask you some questions as we go along, I hope that's OK?

As you are getting closer to your release, you may be thinking about your future and how things might turn out for you – things like what you'll do when you get out, who you will be spending time with, and the conditions of your release.

I. Creation of the Brainstorm Map (30 minutes)

- "I'm going to ask you to think about your future in a certain way – about the different things you see for yourself and the things that are important to you."

Hopes

- "Sometimes we think about what we hope our future will be like. One way to think about this is to talk about possible selves – like different things we could be. An example of this could be 'a (youth's name) who is off probation', or 'a (youth's name) who does adult time'."

- "I'd like you to think about what you hope to have happen for yourself in the future and write your ideas on the post-it notes, spelling doesn't matter. If you'd rather, you can draw an image to show what you're thinking. It's ok if you have a lot of ideas, or just a

few. Take a few minutes now and think about all the dreams you have for yourself in the future. As soon as an idea or picture forms in your mind write that idea on a green note. Put one "possible self" or one idea, on each note. Just continue to let your ideas flow until you have filled as many green sticky notes as you need to. These green notes will represent your hoped-for selves. Take your time and write as many as come to you." *(Give time for writing down ideas)*

- "Reflect on the possible hoped-for selves you have identified, all these things on the sticky-notes. Are there any other hoped-for selves you would like to add?"

<u>Fears</u>

- "Besides having dreams that we hope for, we might also have pictures of ourselves in the future that we are afraid of or don't want to happen. I'm going to ask you to spend just a few minutes thinking about the future and the possible selves you fear. As soon as an idea or picture presents itself to you, jot that idea down on a yellow post-it note. Put one idea on each note and just continue to let your ideas flow until you have filled as many yellow notes as you need to. These will represent your feared selves – Things that you are worried you may become in the future, or things that you are worried you may not become. Again, take your time and write down as many ideas as come up for you. *(Give time for writing these ideas down)*

II. Categorizing Brainstorm Map Hoped-for and Feared Selves

- "Now I'm going to ask you to arrange your hoped-for selves, the ones on the green notes, into groups on this paper – arrange them into any kind of group or sets that work for you." *(Give time for organizing into groups)* "Now please do the same with the feared for selves, the selves on the yellow sticky-notes, and arrange them however you see fit." *(Give time for organizing into groups).*

****If participants ask how they should group them, respond: "Whatever works for you" There is not right or wrong way to do this****

- "Now please give each group of these possible selves a name or title"*(Allow time for reflection and doing this)*

- "Does this look OK to you? Is there anything you want to change?" *(Give lots of time here if needed)*.

III. Debriefing the Brainstorm Map

- "Could you explain this map for me, like what you wrote down and how you organized it?"

Possible Selves Mapping Process Guide
For Youth at Victoria Youth Custody Services

DAY TWO

Thank you again for your work last time, and for coming back this time. So last time we talked about all the future selves you could see for yourself, the ones you hoped-for, and the ones you fear. I had you write them on sticky notes and put them on this big brainstorming map. You organized them for me and gave them a title. Today I'm going to ask you to work a bit on this map, the overview map. Then we're going to talk about things that you can do to make the hoped-for selves more likely to happen, and to lower the chances of the feared selves happening. Does that sound OK? Do you have any questions?

IV. Choosing the Most Hoped-for or Feared Selves

- "Now I'm going to ask you to work with the hoped-for selves. These are the selves you put on the green sticky-notes. Sometimes a hoped-for possible self can seem quite easy to get – at other times not easy to get…"
- *Hopes* – "Which one of these hoped-for selves is most likely to happen – knowing everything you know about yourself and your situation? Put a box around this one."
- *Hopes* – "Which one of these hoped-for selves is least likely to happen – even though it is something you want, you know it is something that may not happen, or is less likely than the others to happen? Please circle this one."
- *Hopes* – "Which is the one you really, really want? Maybe it is a long shot but still there is a part of you that really wants this and holds onto it. Put a star beside this one."
  (some of these may overlap – explain that is OK)

- "Now we'll do the same thing for the fears – sometimes our fears for ourselves in the future can be realistic or very real, and other times they can be somewhat unrealistic or not very real – but the feeling of fear is still there"
- *Fears* – "Which one of these feared for selves is most likely to happen – out of all of these fears, you feel this is the one you most realistically will have to face? Put a box around this one"
- *Fears* – "Which one is least likely to happen – based on everything you know about yourself and your situation? Please circle this one"
- *Fears* – "Which is the one you really, really fear? Put a star beside this one"
  (again – some may overlap and that is OK)

****Throughout this process of working with the participant as they make the above choices - make use of reflective listening and paraphrasing feedback****

V. Transfer Brainstorming Map Information to the Overview Map (5 minutes)

- "Now I'm going to ask you to work just with the selves you have chosen as most likely, least likely and most wanted or feared, on a new overview map. So let's focus on the hoped-for side first. Please put the self that you put the box around in the square spot here. Now put the self that you put a circle around in the circular spot here. Finally, put the one you had a star next to in the star spot." *(Give time for participant to do this) Engage in conversation after they have transferred these onto the overview map individually – why is it most likely, or least likely, or why do you really want this? Ask for elaboration where appropriate.*

- "OK, so now for the feared for selves on this side. Please put the feared for self that you put the box around in the square spot. Now put the feared for self that you circled in the circle on the map. And lastly, can you please put the feared for self with the star on the star spot on the map." *(Give time for participant to do this)*
  Engage in conversation after they have transferred these onto the overview map individually– why is it most likely, or least likely, or why do you really fear this? Ask for elaboration where appropriate.

VI. "Things you can do right now" Question (15 minutes)

<u>Hopes</u>

- *Most likely* – "Things you can do right now if you want to allow this to happen?"
- *Least likely* – "Things you can do right now if you want to give this hope more of a chance?"
- *What I really want* – "Things you can do right now if you want to get to this place?"

<u>Fears</u>

- *Most likely* – "Things you can do right now to understand why this is most likely?"
- *Least likely* – "Things you can do right now to keep this least likely?"
- *What I really fear* – "Things you can do right now to avoid this?"

****Invite participant to jot down ideas in point form on the map as they respond to the above questions****

VII. Overall impressions and feedback (10 minutes)

- "When you look at the maps you have created today – what do you think?"
  Allow time for reflection
- "Do you have anything you want to change or add?"

Appendix B

Table 2:

Participant Hoped-for and Feared Selves Themes and Participant Specific Selves

	Hopes	Fears
Jail		
Returning to Jail	• stop doing things that will get me in trouble (Sweet Lil) • maybe try to stay out of trouble (Subway) • not commit new offences (Jimbo Slice) • stay out of jail unless for good reason (like getting a job in the jail) (Jimbo Slice)	• coming back to jail (Jarvis) • to wind up doing the bad things (illegal) my friends do (Dorito) • come back to jail (Mike) • coming back within a month (Subway) • getting out and doing something stupid (Jarvis) • getting gated (Subway) • going back to jail (Jimbo Slice) • new charges (Fiasco) • scared of being in jail (Sweet Lil)
Probation/Breaching	• getting off probation (Fiasco) • get off probation (Jimbo Slice) • off probation (Mike) • follow my probation while I'm still on probation (Sweet Lil) • get off probation (Sweet Lil)	• probation (breaching and coming back) (Jimbo Slice) • breaching (Fiasco) • abiding by conditions (police hassling) (Jimbo Slice)
Adult		• get adult record (Jimbo Slice) • ending up in adult (Fiasco) • go to adult (Dorito) • going to Penn (Jarvis)

Relationships

Family	• going home to family (leaving foster care) (Subway) • help others (family) (Jarvis) • family (reconnect) (Mike) • keep relationship with girlfriend and sister (Jimbo Slice) • go to Jamaica when dad gets out of jail (Jimbo Slice) • stop family members from coming to jail (Jarvis) • healthy relationship with mom (Jimbo Slice) • spending more time with family (Fiasco) • be good role-model for siblings so she'll want to be successful like me (Dorito)	• I really don't want to be a bad role-model on my little brother/nephew/anyone (Sweet Lil) • losing people I love most (Jarvis) • mom's addiction not improving (Jarvis) • mom and boyfriend's relationship not improving (Jarvis) • grandpa's illness (Jimbo Slice) • relationship with mom not improving (Jimbo Slice) • new family conflicts (Fiasco)
Peers	• keep relationship with girlfriend and sister (Jimbo Slice) • new friends (Mike) • get girlfriend (Mike) • make new friends (Jarvis) • make friends with people who are not in and out of jail (Jimbo Slice) • meeting positive people to set me on a positive lifestyle (Fiasco)	• having a bad relationship with girlfriend or friends (Sweet Lil) • death of friends (Jimbo Slice) • hanging out with same group of friends that's got me in trouble (Fiasco)
Drugs and Alcohol	• control drug and alcohol use (Jimbo Slice)	• to start doing drugs (Dorito) • smoke weed/drinking (lose motivation) (Jimbo Slice) • drugs (Fiasco) • to start drinking again (Dorito) • avoid drugs/gang scene

		(Jarvis)
School/education	• finish school and hopefully go to college (Dorito) • going to school (Fiasco) • finish schooling and go to college/university (Sweet Lil) • grad high school (Jimbo Slice) • school (finish high school) (Mike) • have enough patience for school (Subway) • go to college or university (Jarvis)	• not having an education (Sweet Lil) • not graduating high school (Jimbo Slice)
Work/career	• getting a job (Fiasco) • get career (welder) (Jimbo Slice) • get job so I can pay for rent/food/etc. (Dorito) • get legit job (Jarvis) • be successful (counsellor) (Jarvis) • getting a job (Subway) • I want to have a job building houses when I'm older (Sweet Lil) • work (Mike)	
Success	• move forward with life (Jarvis) • learn from mistakes (Jarvis)	• not be successful (Mike) • to fail goals I've made for myself (Dorito) • have someone ruin my goals (Dorito)
Independence	• getting a car (Subway) • own a car by 18 years old (Jimbo Slice) • Get my own place (Dorito) • live independently upon release (Jimbo Slice) • be independent and not have to depend on anyone else (Dorito)	• to have to depend on someone looking after me my whole life (Dorito) • not able to look after myself (Sweet Lil) • I'm scared of being in a struggle for health, for money, for anything, because that's how I was raised – in a struggle

		(Sweet Lil)
Life of crime		• change who I am (new way of thinking) (Jarvis) • new beefs (Fiasco) • leaving a gang and not suffering the consequences (Jarvis) • karma (Jarvis) • revenge (Jarvis) • dying (Fiasco) • dying young (Sweet Lil) • going back to old ways (Jarvis)
Physical health/wellness	• start football again (Jimbo Slice) • sports (Mike) • start working out and pay attention to my health (Sweet Lil')	• I really don't want to be unhealthy (Sweet Lil) • dying (Fiasco) • dying young (Sweet Lil) • becoming fat (Jimbo Slice)
Other	• travel the world or something (Jarvis) • winning the lotto (Subway) • get more tattoos (Mike) • counselling and therapy to help me choose right decision (Fiasco)	• to get pregnant (Dorito)

Appendix C

Table 3:

Supports and Barriers Upon Release: Themes and Specific Responses

Supports

Programs	o work skills program (work skills and less free time) (Fiasco) o NA (help manage drug use) (Fiasco) o ISSP (help him with basics) (Jimbo Slice) o ISSP worker (got him job), (Mike) o Doesn't think coastline will be helpful but hopes to do landscaping program to get job, (Subway) o said he liked this program (Sweet Lil) o Program (help with school, D&A counselling, independent living skills, get job, etc.), (Dorito) o program, (Jarvis)
Professional	o ISSP worker (drive them to places, get food) (Fiasco) o ISSP (help him with basics) (Jimbo Slice) o ISSP worker (got him job), (Mike) o social worker (practical stuff, helping to strengthen family relationships), (Mike) o D&A counsellor (might help with D&A use and may decrease chances of breaches (Jimbo Slice) o social worker (provides basics), (Subway) o ISSP (helps him get to appointments etc.), (Subway) o counsellor (talks to him about what he wants etc), (Subway) o PO (helps because he wants Subway to learn, doesn't help because he puts him back in jail for breaches), (Subway) o counsellors, (Sweet Lil) o ISSP worker (help with school), (Dorito) o counsellor (someone to talk to, to take off pressure so she doesn't drink), (Dorito) o social worker (give her options about how to live life), (Dorito) o PO (wants to help him get off probation), (Dorito) o counsellors and teachers)who "have a head on their shoulders" and who is safe to talk to) (Jarvis) o People who want him to succeed legitimately (sister, girlriend, grandma, PO), (Jimbo Slice)
Family/friends	o family (Fiasco) o People who want him to succeed legitimately (sister, girlfriend, grandma, PO), (Jimbo Slice) o getting a girlfriend (Fiasco) o good foster home (well equipped, supportive, good relationships), (Mike)

- big brother (unconditional support), (Mike)
- family, (Sweet Lil)
- girlfriend (Sweet Lil')
- family support and motivation to do well, (Subway)
- mom and brother, (Jarvis)
- friend who wants to support her to make good life (Dorito)

Structure
- sports (keep him out of trouble), (Jimbo Slice)
- job (provide structure and new social group), (Mike)
- sports (healthy lifestyle and healthy peers), (Mike)
- structure on outs (gym, school), (Sweet Lil)

Themselves
- Himself - "I'm my main support" (his decisions are most important), (Jimbo Slice)
- himself, (Sweet Lil)

Miscellaneous
- Indigenous ceremonies (for forgiveness), (Jarvis)
- doing 4 months in jail (showed him he doesn't want to come back), (Subway)

Barriers

Drugs and Alcohol
- drinking (because it leads to breaches) (Fiasco)
- drugs and alcohol
- drugs and alcohol (it makes him breach and it's against law), (Subway)
- drugs (because of lifestyle), (Jarvis)
- drinking, (Sweet Lil)
- friends (because he drinks & uses when he's with them and that increase chances of new crime), (Subway)
- drinking (losses motivation and focus), (Dorito)

Peers
- peers who motivate him to do bad things (Fiasco)
- peers, (Jimbo Slice)
- loss of a girlfriend, (Sweet Lil)
- hanging out with old friends, (Mike)
- peer group, (Sweet Lil)
- peers (do crime but because she has record she gets more trouble) (Dorito)

Breaching
- breaching (his choices), (Mike)
- if his PO has to breach him (Subway)
- drugs & alcohol (it makes him breach and it's against law), (Subway)
- drinking (because it leads to breaches) (Fiasco)

Repercussions of L.O.C.	○ old beefs (Fiasco) ○ cops and having a record, (Jimbo Slice) ○ gang mentality, (Jarvis) ○ reputation with police drawing more heat, (Jarvis) ○ saying goodbye to friends who are still in crime life (Jarvis) ○ cops arresting him on charges from past (and then coming back to jail and losing hope), (Jarvis)
Other	○ learning about legit money/missing dealing (the rush, the community, the new money management skills you need when $ is legit) (Fiasco) ○ temptation, (Sweet Lil) ○ my feelings and not thinking (like once he's in bad mood it's hard to stop negative actions), (Sweet Lil) ○ guilt trips, (Jarvis)