

“I DON’T GOT MY BABY; I DON’T GOT NOBODY”:
PARENTING PROBLEMS AND IDEOLOGIES AMONG MOTHERS ON PROBATION AND
PAROLE

By

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ABSTRACT

This study uses a mixed-method design to better understand the challenges faced by mothers who are involved in the criminal justice system. Justice-involved women are typically and more often than men involved in the justice system due to substance abuse, and there has been a dramatic increase in such involvement because of changing policies related to drugs that focused on surveillance and criminalization of substance-involved mothers (Belknap, 2014; Morash, 2010; O'Brien, 2001). This study is novel because it provides an interdisciplinary focus for examining the multiple and understudied ways in which motherhood and supervision impact the outcomes for women, their children, and their communities. Specifically, this dissertation extends prior criminal justice and developmental criminological theory on women as well as research on intensive parenting, a social psychological theory of the dominant parenting ideology in the U.S. (Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016).

By conducting a deep analysis of women's vivid accounts of their parenting experiences while on community supervision this dissertation (1) identifies the most common parenting problems discussed during qualitative interviews with 156 women on probation or parole for a felony who have a history of substance involvement, (2) assesses the association of having various types of parenting problems while on supervision on subsequent quantitative measures of women's psychological well-being and recidivism, and (3) explores qualitative content regarding beliefs, actions, and influences on women's parenting ideologies, including their interactions with their supervision agents.

The findings based on women's accounts indicate that nine parenting problems (i.e., resource problems; criminal justice problems; substance use, mental health, or physical health problems; problems with child custody or contact; negative personal relationships; others'

negative relationships with children; neighborhood danger; problems of children; and parenting ideology conflicts) significantly impact mothers involved in the criminal justice system. This research leads to ideas for future research on parenting problems for justice-involved mothers and the development of specific quantitative measures based on the qualitative findings regarding parenting problems which could be used by researchers and practitioners as they assess the risks and needs of justice-involved mothers. The study also provides insight into the ways the Intensive Parenting Attitudes Questionnaire (IPAQ) from social psychology could be improved to more specifically examine justice-involved mothers' beliefs and actions related to motherhood. An improved scale on these attitudes could be used by practitioners to help them consider as they manage case plans and the ways they communicate with clients about parenting. Overall, the qualitative analyses lead to potential scale items reflecting parenting problems, particularly those related to risks and recidivism, including parenting problems associated with conflicts with intensive parenting expectations and beliefs. The reflections on mothers' parenting attitudes also provide an understanding of the individuals and experiences that influence justice-involved mothers' beliefs about parenting which could be used to identify how women develop potentially unrealistic and problematic beliefs about ideal parenting.

Dedicated to my mother, Barbara Moon Adams, for continuously inspiring me to be
hardworking and optimistic.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE RESULTS ON PARENTING PROBLEMS	28
CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE RESULTS ON PARENTING IDEOLOGIES.....	47
CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS ON THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PARENTING PROBLEMS AND WOMEN’S WELL-BEING AND RECIDIVISM	76
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION.....	87
REFERENCES	103
APPENDIX A: PARENTING PROBLEMS CODEBOOK	111
APPENDIX B: PARENTING IDEOLOGY CODEBOOK	112

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As an undergraduate student, I studied psychology and criminal justice, and I pursued research and job experience on the issues of children with behavioral problems. However, this trajectory quickly shifted when I started working with qualitative data for a project studying the experiences of women on probation and parole. I became engrossed in the intense focus the women had on parenting. I couldn't see the participants' facial expressions, but the variety and intensity of emotions women expressed about parenting jumped off the pages of the transcripts. The positivity when discussing parenting as well as the extreme sadness when reflecting on parenting problems was palpable through their persistent focus on children and in their laughter and cries. The words of these women captivated my interest and gave me incredible insight into the experiences of women who spoke passionately about parenting whether they were asked about the subject or spontaneously when asked about other topics. This work and my subsequent research showed me how women who get in trouble with the law often encounter extreme challenges as they attempt to exit the revolving door of the criminal justice system as mothers. I found that this journey is accompanied by further complications for those who struggle to care for or gain desired custody of their minor children.

Jamie captured the extreme effect of the common struggles justice-involved mothers experience when she described the anguish and emptiness she felt due to her inability to spend time with and gain custody of her son when she spoke about her deep depression and sobbed, "I don't got my baby, I don't got nobody." This problem seemed to persist over time as she described the pain of being separated from her son across multiple interviews. Her reflections not only revealed the pervasive issues and strife for justice-involved mothers who experience

struggles to maintain custody, but she also mentioned how both the larger criminal justice system and her children's caregiver sabotaged her relationship with her child.

Jamie's experience is unfortunately not a unique theme as these struggles commonly emerged in the 1200 interviews with 402 women on probation or parole. Accounts of women in the study are riddled with such struggles and reveal the variety and often compounding problems they faced as parents under the guise of correctional control including the contamination of their personal and parental identities. This mixed methods, longitudinal exploration of the voices of the 156 mothers from the larger sample reveals the complexities of parenting experiences for mothers on probation or parole. Like Jamie, many of the women experienced motives related to parenting in the face of obstacles related to their justice-system involvement and the continuation of the compounding parenting problems they faced before getting in trouble with the law. The deep reflections of the justice-involved mothers in this study help parse out inconsistencies in prior research on motherhood and reoffending by illuminating their specific parenting problems, and the unrealistic confluence of parental and correctional expectations that often consumed their lives. By understanding how these unique experiences relate to women's psychological well-being and recidivism, these women's perspectives contribute to the development of research approaches and practices important to consider when working with justice-involved mothers.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines mothers who are involved in the criminal justice system as felony probationers and parolees with a history of substance involvement. Although probation is the most common punishment given by the criminal justice system in the U.S., the amount of research examining this topic is relatively small compared to other criminal justice decision points (see Huebner & Shannon, 2022). The treatment and impacts of community supervision on

women have been significantly overlooked (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Morash, 2010) and have become increasingly important due to efforts to reduce overcrowding and expenses related to mass incarceration (Auerhahn, 2022). In this dissertation, I fill a significant gap in this research by examining the challenges of being on community supervision as a mother based on the detailed reports from the perspectives of justice-involved mothers. These combined and often conflicting experiences of managing supervision and motherhood are examined in relation to subsequent measures of psychological well-being and recidivism. I use a mixed methodology approach to specifically address the inconsistencies in research findings by examining how different types of parenting problems relate to their psychological well-being and recidivism. This research also examines qualitative content to assess the experiences and interpersonal interactions that women associate with their parenting ideologies or their beliefs about parenting. Answering these questions is important for several reasons.

First, the number of women under correctional control has increased dramatically since the 1970s because of tough-on-crime policies, the war on drugs, and the gendered effects of public policy (Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004; Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999; Opsal, 2009; Petersilia, 2003). Increasingly punitive responses to substance-related offenses, in particular, have resulted in a disproportionate growth in the number of women in conflict with the law, with the consequence that substance issues are more common among justice-involved women and are more likely the basis for their involvement with the criminal justice system compared to men (Carson, 2020; Fedock, Fries, & Kubiak, 2013; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Herring, 2020; Mauer, Potler, & Wolf, 1999; Morash, 2010; Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2013). Data on incarcerated individuals indicates that women were more often using or dependent on substances before incarceration (Maruschak & Bronson, 2021; Mumola & Karberg, 2006), and that women

reported dependency on harder drugs like cocaine compared to incarcerated men (Peters, et al., 1997). Scholars argue that women's initial and continued involvement in the justice system is largely connected to their addiction and to property crimes related to their addiction and economic marginalization (Kopak & Smith-Ruiz, 2014). Recent research has also shown that women are more likely to be convicted and incarcerated for substance-related crimes and property crimes compared to men who are more likely incarcerated for violent crimes (Carson, 2022).

Following the increased criminalization of substance use, women supervised in the community grew by 79.3%, with an increase from 575,631 in 1995 to 1,031,999 in 2016, while men supervised in the community grew by approximately half that rate (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997; Kaeble & Bonczar, 2016). This provides evidence that women have dissimilar pathways to crime and therefore experience unique struggles and require different correctional approaches than justice-involved men (Belknap, 2014; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Morash, 2010; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Seaman & Lynch, 2022). Though navigating reintegration and community supervision poses challenges for all justice-involved individuals, women's paths to desistance are generally more complicated than men's due to their elevated substance use, and their levels of social and economic marginalization (Allen, 2018; Bloom et al., 2003; Owen & Bloom, 1995; Seaman & Lynch, 2022). Relatedly, women are more negatively impacted by legislation that restricts individuals with drug-related felonies from receiving public aid, as well as from obtaining different forms of licensure for employment (Allard, 2002; Allen, 2018).

In addition, women are four times more likely than men to be single parents, and female single parents are the most economically marginalized population in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). Since justice-involved women are often single mothers, they are more adversely

affected by social policies that curtail assistance programs and by policies that limit the time children can be in foster care before their parental rights are permanently terminated (Bloom et al., 2004). The consequences of these reforms and policies are amplified for justice-involved women who disproportionately experience other overlapping forms of marginalization and victimization based on attributes such as race, class, education, and histories of abuse, substance use, and mental health issues (Allard, 2002; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Seaman & Lynch, 2022). The struggles of justice-involved individuals are apparent in studies displaying high rates of recidivism (Deschenes, Owen, & Crow, 2007). This is also evident in research indicating that probationers and parolees are more likely to be incarcerated for supervision violations, such as indications of substance use, rather than new offenses (Belknap, 2010; Kaeble & Bonczar, 2016). Given the startling increase in women at odds with the law, who are often primary caregivers of minor children and who have histories of substance involvement, it is imperative to study the experiences of women and mothers who are increasingly criminalized, marginalized, and largely misunderstood (Adams, 2020; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Garcia, 2016; Kaeble & Bonczar, 2016; Morash, 2010; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Seaman & Lynch, 2022; Stone, 2015).

Second, burgeoning research on justice-involved women suggests that it is essential to consider their unique risks and experiences to improve correctional programming, especially since the research that informs correctional practice has primarily focused on men (Belknap, 2014; Bloom, Owen, Covington, & Raeder, 2003; Cullen, Agnew, & Wilcox, 2014; Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988; Morash, 2010). Life course theories, like most criminological frameworks, were developed based on male-focused studies, but have more recently been adapted to assess variations in female desistance (Adams et al., 2017; Giordano, 2010; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). Since life course frameworks use both qualitative and quantitative sources of information to

grasp the dynamic features involved in offending trajectories, they provide a helpful guide for understanding the complex opportunities and struggles faced by understudied groups, such as justice-involved women (Giordano, 2010) who are more often under the guise of correctional control due to substance involvement (Carson, 2022). Life course research has identified how new or strengthened prosocial roles can help individuals desist from crime by providing them with prosocial routines and motivations that cut them off from antisocial lifestyles (Giordano, 2010; Sampson & Laub, 2003). For instance, interviews have shown how men emphasize life events such as employment and marriage as facilitators for their prosocial change (Giordano, 2010; Sampson & Laub, 2003). Though life course studies of facilitators of women's desistance also involve employment, women more centrally focus on their concern for their children and how their responsibilities as parents motivate their positive behaviors (Giordano, 2010; Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002).

Third, although parenting appears to be a motivational force for justice-involved women's prosocial change, transitions into motherhood and motivations to change for children are not consistently associated with reduced recidivism (Adams, 2020; Adams et al., 2017; Bachman et al., 2016; Giordano, 2010; Giordano, Cernkovich & Rudolph, 2002; Michalsen, 2011; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). Scholars have highlighted how parenting problems that are commonly encountered by justice-involved women may diminish the prosocial capacity of the parental role and could also place women at elevated risk for recidivism by increasing their parenting stress (Adams et al., 2017; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Giordano, 2010). Although it is evident that some women face barriers to using parenting as a catalyst for prosocial change, it is unclear how specific parenting problems faced by justice-involved mothers can reduce the prosocial capacity of the parenting role. A holistic focus on the features of parenting that

diminish women's well-being and increase their recidivism, such as the specific parenting problems they encounter while on supervision, could be used to advance understanding of the complications that must be considered in life course research on motherhood as well as in correctional practice with justice-involved mothers.

Fourth, negative effects of the parenting problems that women in the justice system face may be exacerbated by the dominant parenting ideology in the U.S. This ideology emphasizes intensive parenting. Scholars have shown how the intensive parenting ideology can be harmful to women by promoting unrealistic expectations that foster exhaustive parenting efforts and overly critical evaluations of women as parents (Adams, 2020; Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016; Liss et al., 2013a). Through this rhetoric, parenting has been popularized as the source and solution for the most problematic social concerns in the U.S., including educational deficiency and juvenile delinquency (Collins, 2000; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Golden, 2005). Mothers in the justice system are often targets of surveillance and parenting programs that reinforce intensive parenting rhetoric (Collins, 2001; LaBorde, 2009). Those studying justice-involved mothers and mothers with similar vulnerabilities such as those facing addiction and economic struggles have highlighted how intensive parenting may be particularly harmful. This is because such women are less able to meet these expectations, so they commonly struggle with their identity as mothers (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Granja et al., 2015; Opsal, 2009). Additionally, the concentration on individual parents as the primary determinants for children's behavior and future detracts focus from the larger social mechanisms that contribute to both children's and mother's opportunities and outcomes (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Elliott, Powell, & Brenton, 2015; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Hays, 1996).

Fifth, understanding risks related to parenting for the growing number of mothers on probation and parole is also critical because mothers' continued involvement in the criminal justice system places children at risk for mental health and behavioral problems by destabilizing their living placements, worsening their economic circumstances, and disrupting their social relationships (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999; Johnston, 2006; Mackintosh et al., 2006; Phillips et al., 2002; Travis, 2005). The problems experienced by children may be linked to the difficulties common among justice-involved women, notably substance abuse, mental illness, and limited education (Bloom et al., 2003; Phillips et al., 2006; Van Voorhis et al., 2013; Van Voorhis et al., 2010). Thus, it is vital to understand the association of parenting experiences with mothers' well-being and their recidivism not only to best assist justice-involved mothers but also to benefit the estimated 1.4 million minor children with a mother on supervision (Kaeble & Bonzcar, 2016; Miller, 2008).

Sixth, the results from this study have important implications for policy and practice. For example, the findings could help guide correctional efforts in identifying and addressing parenting problems as well as programmatic flaws (e.g., probation and parole agents' advice, parenting programs, familial interventions) that contribute to women's problems. This would have important implications for training as well as the development of programming that is better tailored to the needs of women. Additionally, the study furthers understanding of how parenting ideologies may intensify or ease the consequences of justice-involved mothers' parenting problems, which would speak directly to the types of resources necessary to provide better assistance to women.

This dissertation fills significant gaps in the research literature and adds valuable understanding about the treatment of mothers in the criminal justice system. In Chapter 2, I will

review previous literature that has guided this study. The topics from existing research include developmental research on justice-involved women, parenting problems experienced by mothers, as well as research on intensive parenting beliefs that shape the identities and experiences of mothers in the general population and for mothers involved in the justice system. Then in Chapter 3 the mixed method approach is discussed, including an overview of the original study, and a description of each of the subsamples considered in the qualitative and quantitative analyses. The results for the qualitative analyses are reviewed in Chapter 4. Specifically, the most common parenting problems are reviewed including examples from the accounts of the mothers in the sample. Chapter 5 discusses parenting ideologies and the most common influences on women's parenting based on their accounts. Several correlations are included in Chapter 5 to identify the relationships between parenting ideologies and outcomes with influences linked with parenting ideologies. Chapter 6 discusses the quantitative findings on the relationships between the presence of each parenting problem and the measures of the women's subsequent well-being and recidivism using correlations and regressions. Finally, Chapter 7 compiles the findings and prior research to reflect on suggestions for future research and policies that could be used to improve the treatment of justice-involved mothers.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Before delving into the methods, findings, and conclusions from this study, it's necessary to discuss prior literature on motherhood and desistance in criminal justice settings. Therefore, this chapter focuses on justice-involved mothers and similarly situated women's vulnerabilities, including indicators of diminished psychological well-being, that are notable risks for recidivism. A review of the problems associated with beliefs about parenting is also included to provide a backdrop for the expectations women face as mothers which can be particularly difficult for them to achieve due to the risks they faced prior to and following their trouble with the law. Limitations of the current body of work in these areas are highlighted as it pertains to the research questions that are the focus of the current study.

Motherhood and Desistance

Giordano and colleagues (2002) developed the theory of cognitive transformation based on the narratives of women with histories of serious delinquency. The theory identifies a process which begins with an individual becoming aware of an opportunity to assume a prosocial role and ends in prosocial motivations and behavior changes that result from assuming the prosocial role. Giordano and colleagues (2002) hypothesized that individuals at the latter stages of change exhibit more longstanding prosocial transformation as their conscious prosocial motivations and behaviors reinforce a new or strengthened prosocial identity that conflicts with deviance (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002). Because women's narrative accounts reveal that they have great concern for their children and are highly motivated to make prosocial changes for their children, parenting has been a key focus for research on women's desistance and risks for recidivism (Adams, 2014; Adams, 2020; Adams et al., 2017; Bachman et al., 2015; Giordano, 2010; Michalsen, 2011; Schienkel, 2019; Stone & Rydberg, 2019).

Suggesting a positive influence of parenting on desistance, research has revealed that children are central in the lives of many justice-involved mothers and that women commonly attribute prosocial changes in their behavior to motherhood (Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2017; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Giordano, 2010; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). Also, parenting can provide a beneficial structure in justice-involved mothers' lives by influencing their development of prosocial motivations and routines (Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2017; Arditti & Few, 2008; Bachman et al., 2015; Bloom & Brown, 2009; Giordano, 2010; Michalsen, 2011). Children can provide high levels of life satisfaction and attachment for women, particularly for women in disadvantaged environments who have fewer alternative prosocial opportunities (Edin & Kefalas, 2005; Sharp & Marcus-Mendoza, 2001), and parenting can promote the development of a prosocial self-image (Giordano et al., 2002). For many women who have broken the law, imagining and filling the prosocial role of mother is a common and important step in the desistance process (Barry, 2007; Leverentz, 2014; Rumgay, 2004).

However, contradictory research findings about the effects of parenting on recidivism suggest that the relationship is not clear and that there is a need for a more thorough assessment of specific dimensions of parenting and an investigation of the connection of these dimensions to women's risks for recidivism (e.g., mental health, parenting stress). Although women's accounts show how parenting is an important motivator for change, parenting routines and motivations are not consistently related to women's desistance from crime (Adams, 2014; Adams et al., 2017; Bachman et al., 2015; Giordano, 2010; Michalsen, 2011). For instance, in Giordano's (2010) longitudinal examination of a sample of formerly delinquent adults, she found that women's accounts focused more on how children served as a motivator for prosocial change compared to men. However, she found noteworthy variation in the reoffending of women who described

parenting motivations, and she also found inconsistencies in women's connection between parenting and their antisocial behavior during follow-up interviews (Giordano, 2010). To explain inconsistencies in prior research, using the same qualitative data that was analyzed in this dissertation, Adams and colleagues (2017) coded the in-depth qualitative interviews with substance-involved mothers on probation and parole ($n = 190$) for routine activities with children and for motivations to be better mothers. This research also examined how quantified indicators of parenting routines and motivations were associated with women's recidivism in an 18-month period and included interaction effects with women's reports on crime in their neighborhoods. For justice-involved mothers who lived in neighborhoods with low levels of crime, high engagement in routine activities with children and high motivation to be better mothers were related to low recidivism. However, for women in neighborhoods with high levels of crime, routine activities with children were unrelated to recidivism, and high motivation to be a better mother was unexpectedly related to high recidivism. Thus, for some women, parenting routines and motivations to be effective parents do not translate into reduced recidivism. Prior literature, these findings, and familiarity with the available data led to questions about whether women's problems in parenting and difficulties in achieving parenting goals reduced the association between both parenting activities and motivations with risks for breaking the law. For instance, women who were engaged in parenting activities might have heightened parenting stress if they struggled with problems such as keeping children safe and out of trouble in high-crime neighborhoods. Overall, the research suggests that parenting is not a consistent catalyst for women's desistance (Adams et al., 2017; Bachman et al., 2015; Michalsen, 2011), and at least for some women, parenting can increase women's illegal behavior by creating stress, perceptions of failure, and parenting responsibilities that are difficult to achieve for justice-involved mothers

(Adams, 2020; Adams et al., 2017; Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom 2009; Garcia, 2016; Giordano, 2010; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Van Voorhis et al., 2012, 2013) This dissertation provides additional insights into developmental and criminological research by further examining the relationship between motherhood and recidivism. In the next section, I provide a thorough review of the literature on the parenting problems encountered by justice-involved women which can serve as a guide to how parenting circumstances relate to risks and recidivism.

Parenting Problems for Justice-Involved Mothers

Justice-involved women face obstacles that conflict with their parenting goals and that exacerbate their parenting stress. Supervision requirements, struggles addressing addiction, and problems with finding stable housing and employment are examples of some of these obstacles. When faced with competing obligations, mothers may be inclined to make sacrifices for children that compromise their personal well-being (Bloom & Brown, 2009; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999). Women who strive but fail to meet parenting goals may return to drug use or other crime. For instance, many women initially desist from drug use to obtain child custody, but if they fail (e.g., they cannot establish adequate living quarters for children) they may relapse (Ferraro & Moe, 2003). Therefore, overwhelming parenting responsibilities and competing demands may diminish the positive effects of the maternal role and limit women's pursuit of prosocial roles apart from parenting.

Existing research on justice-involved women shows how women's roles and responsibilities as parents are uniquely complicated by their involvement with the justice system (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Robison & Hughes-Miller, 2016). For women on parole, parenting is more of a concern than for men, because women are more often the primary caregivers of

children prior to incarceration and are less able to rely on the other biological parent for support during periods of incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). Despite studies indicating women's common focus on the well-being of children and regaining contact and custody (Giordano, 2010), some mothers experience barriers to regaining custody and some decide against attempting to gain custody due to the risks their children could face if they had custody of children (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Garcia, 2016; Garcia-Hallett, 2017; Michalsen, 2010; Opsal, 2015). In fact, in one study Opsal (2015) found that only a small percentage of the mothers in her study attempted to gain full custody of their children. This was often because of the constraints and obstacles of parenting while on parole. Research on probation agents' perspectives has also indicated parenting is a more prominent issue for female clients. Seng and Lurigio (2005) found that probation agents indicated that working with their female probation clients was particularly difficult due to their common need for emotional and instrumental support related to parenting challenges. Agents frequently ascribed women's failures on supervision to their difficulty managing parenting responsibilities. Also, a series of studies by Van Voorhis and colleagues (2012, 2013) have shown that parenting stress is related to recidivism for women on probation.

Certain restrictions on supervision can also uniquely hinder mothers, such as policies that prohibit those on community supervision from interacting with other individuals with a felony record (Morash, 2010; Opsal, 2015). Since justice-involved women's support networks are typically small and criminogenic, restrictions such as staying away from other felons can uniquely impact women by complicating child visitation and eliminating their access to critical sources of support from their families and their children's fathers (O'Brien, 2001; Opsal, 2009). Women's ability to comply with supervision requirements while also addressing their own and

their children's needs is especially challenging for women who, like many of those on probation and parole, are economically marginalized, excluded from social welfare programs, have limited social support, and lack transportation access (Bloom et al., 2003; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Harp et al., 2012; Mallik-Kane & Visser, 2008; Northcutt Bohmert, 2016; Opsal, 2015).

Research on justice-involved women has grown substantially and risk assessment tools have evolved to better identify women's risks and needs through the development of measures such as the parenting stress subscale in the Women's Risk Needs Assessment (WRNA) tool (Van Voorhis et al., 2012, 2014). However, research is needed to determine the specific types of parenting problems that contribute to women's risks for recidivism such as psychological well-being, which includes higher levels of parenting stress.

In this dissertation, I seek to extend research on parenting and reoffending by identifying whether women's experiences with specific types of parenting problems identified by in-depth interviews with mothers on felony probation or parole who encounter common parenting problems (e.g., managing resource problems, criminal justice system involvement, substance use, mental health, issues education/employment, and neighborhood danger) and how these issues are associated with their subsequent psychological well-being and recidivism.

These aspects of well-being are particularly important to examine in relation to women's parenting problems while they undergo legal penalties for criminal convictions. One markedly important aspect in justice-involved women's lives is their struggles with addiction and substance involvement (Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009). The parenting problems that are identified, and distinctly those that are associated with diminished well-being and heightened recidivism, would be important targets for future research and practitioner attention. Understanding the parenting problems that contribute to women's risks and recidivism could

better inform correctional staff on ways to assist mothers as well as ways to design correctional requirements that account for the challenges of mothers. Specific information on the parenting problems of justice-involved mothers could also be used to create more precise measures to include in risk assessment tools for justice-involved mothers.

Research on Intensive Parenting Ideologies

Familiarity with the available data and a review of the literature on intensive parenting, the dominant parenting ideology in the U.S., (Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016; Liss et al., 2013a) influenced the decision to also focus on women's narratives to identify beliefs about parenting for justice-involved mothers. In her qualitative research on mothers, Hays (1996) coined the term 'intensive parenting' to describe the common pressures on mothers to contribute extensive time and financial resources to parenting. These expectations included understanding the proper ways to parent children at different developmental periods and purchasing expensive products and services to ensure children's success. Consistent with the intensive parenting ideology, mothers were typically urged to seek expert advice through books, magazines, newsletters, and parenting classes that touted the best practices for child-rearing. Hays (1996) also showed how mothers saw themselves as uniquely qualified and responsible for childcare due to the fundamental role of mothers in child development (Hays, 1996). With increased research on child development and the 'best practices for parenting,' plus the focus of the media on the harm to children caused by inappropriate parenting practices, intensive parenting has become increasingly popular, ambiguous, and difficult to achieve (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Hays, 1996; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012; Wall, 2010).

Hays (1996) and other scholars who have studied intensive parenting (Collins, 2000; Damaske, 2013; Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Henderson et al., 2016; Newman & Henderson,

2014; Rizzo et al., 2013; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012; Wall, 2010) argue that these widespread beliefs ignore women's growing involvement in the labor market and the decline of traditional, nuclear family households in the US. Despite increasing expectations that women obtain employment to support themselves and their families, intensive parenting expectations continue to designate mothers as the primary caretakers for their children. Qualitative research outside of criminal justice has shown that being held to intensive parenting expectations by others and subscribing to this ideology can be harmful to mothers by reducing their self-efficacy and life satisfaction, and by increasing their stress, guilt, and anxiety (Henderson et al., 2016; Newman & Henderson, 2014; Wall, 2010).

Based on widespread qualitative research on the consequences of intensive parenting attitudes, Liss and Colleagues (2013) created and validated the Intensive Parenting Attitudes Questionnaire (IPAQ) to examine the statistical dimensions and correlates of this belief system for women in the general population. Liss and Colleagues (2013) created this scale based on themes found in previous qualitative research (Hays, 1996; Wall 2010) and identified five distinct dimensions of intensive parenting beliefs using latent variable analysis. The dimensions include beliefs that women are uniquely qualified and responsible for child-rearing (essentialism), that parenting should be fulfilling (fulfillment), that parenting should be guided by expert advice and should be stimulating to children (stimulation), that parents should make sacrifices for children and cater parenting practices to children's individual needs (child-centered), and finally that parenting should be difficult and requires extensive time and resources of parents (all-consuming parenting) (Liss et al., 2013a). Liss and colleagues (2013a) examined how the five dimensions correlated with measures of parenting to evaluate the predictive validity of the scales and to identify dimensions of intensive parenting that may be harmful for women.

They found women's higher scores for essentialism and all-consuming parenting were problematic, as women with these beliefs less often accepted the parental role and exhibited lower levels of parenting satisfaction and efficacy (Liss et al., 2013). They also found that mothers with higher scores on essentialism had lower life satisfaction, and mothers with high scores on all-consuming parenting had heightened levels of stress and depression (Rizzo et al., 2013). Most of these psychological outcomes are risk factors for recidivism (Draine & Soloman, 1994; Laudet, Becker, & White, 2009; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009). Prior to the qualitative assessment of parenting beliefs and actions in this dissertation, the scale items reflecting intensive parenting attitudes from the IPAQ were examined in relation to psychological well-being (Adams, 2020). The only two factors that emerged for the sample of mothers (i.e., essentialism and all-consuming parenting) were assessed. Correlations among the dimensions of intensive parenting and the psychological variables indicated that essentialism was negatively associated with self-efficacy and positively associated with parenting stress. All-consuming parenting was negatively associated with self-efficacy and positively associated with symptoms of depression/anxiety, anger/hostility, and parenting stress (Adams, 2020). Therefore, studying justice-involved mothers' intensive parenting ideologies based on rich qualitative data was a promising step in understanding the complex relationship between motherhood and risks for reoffending as well as the unique parenting beliefs and actions among justice-involved mothers.

Intensive Parenting and Justice-Involved Women

Qualitative research reflecting intensive parenting beliefs within and outside the field of criminal justice has shown how intensive parenting expectations are prevalent despite great disparity in the resources available to mothers and their children (Collins, 2000; Granja, Cunha, & Machado, 2015; Hays, 1996; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012). The harms of intensive parenting

ideologies may be particularly acute for those who face additional barriers to achieving intensive parenting prescriptions, such as barriers experienced by single, low-income, mothers who are involved in the justice system (Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012). There is just not much research on this issue especially using larger sample sizes and rich qualitative data. For justice-involved mothers, guilt or shame associated with their perceptions of parental failure may prompt attempts to achieve impractical goals aimed at mending their maternal identity and their relationships with their children (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Opsal, 2009). Exhaustive efforts to meet idealized parenting goals can result in mothers' neglect of personal needs such as their need for substance abuse treatment (Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999) and their continued use of negative coping strategies (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Opsal, 2009, 2011). Depending on the extent of parenting problems, intensive parenting ideologies may produce additional stress and negative outcomes for justice-involved women (Granja et al., 2015). These qualitative studies show how justice-involved mothers may exhibit additional struggles in achieving intensive parenting goals as well as adapt their beliefs about parenting to align with their justice involvement and their profound life challenges. Therefore, it is important to better understand how intensive parenting ideologies are experienced by women who have broken the law, particularly for women who face parenting problems while on supervision.

Researchers have not specifically examined intensive parenting ideologie in programming for women involved in the justice system, but studies on parenting classes and support groups characterized by intensive parenting have found negative impacts on women's life satisfaction and self-efficacy (LaBorde, 2009; Newman & Henderson, 2014). Parenting programs are frequently available to women in prison (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008). In the

community, parenting programs are commonly provided to or required for justice-involved women seeking increased visitation or custody of children. Mothers charged with child maltreatment or suspected of using drugs while on supervision are often required by both child protective service workers and probation and parole agents to attend parenting programs (Morash, 2010). Despite widespread advice and education on parenting for justice-involved women, assessments of community programs are limited by small samples and strikingly different program aims (Goshin et al., 2017). Yet, several studies suggest that programs with gender-specific aims reinforce beliefs in the centrality of women's roles as parents rather than encouraging women to take on other potentially important roles that may promote reduced recidivism (Bertand, 1999; Erez, 1989). It is vital to understand how beliefs about ideal parenting develop among justice-involved women to identify how potentially harmful intensive parenting ideologies can manifest or be reinforced within programs that justice-involved mothers attend. This information could be used to inform correctional practitioners on the ways to discuss, assist and make referrals to clients facing different parenting problems.

Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

The goals of this dissertation are to use qualitative data to (1) understand the most common parenting problems experienced by mothers on probation and parole and (2) explore the features of women's parenting goals and ideologies (3) and influences on women's development of their parenting goals and ideologies. Quantitative analysis will also be used to examine the connection of parenting problems with both mothers' well-being and their recidivism.

Research Questions

1. What are the most common types of parenting problems discussed by justice-involved mothers?

2. What are the most common types of parenting ideologies discussed by justice-involved mothers?
3. What are the most common influences on justice-involved mothers' parenting ideologies?
4. How do parenting problem impact well-being and recidivism of the mothers?

Hypotheses

1. Parenting problems will be negatively related to quantitative measures of justice-involved mothers' psychological well-being at the follow-up interview.
2. Parenting problems will be positively related to justice-involved mothers' recidivism during the 84-month period after the study began.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview of the Current Study

The present study is a secondary analysis of data collected in two consecutive studies of a sample of women on felony probation or parole with a history of substance involvement. The qualitative data includes the three interviews conducted within the first nine months of supervision (T1-T3), and these were examined to identify and code the most common types of problems that mothers ($n = 156$) described about parenting. These data were transformed into dichotomous quantitative indicators of whether women experienced nine common parenting problem types. The dichotomous indicators of having each type of parenting problem were assessed in relation to five subsequent measures of women's psychological well-being (referred to as Well-Being) that were measured for 98 mothers from the same sample who participated in a follow-up interview (T4) approximately three years after the last interview: depression/anxiety, anger/hostility, self-efficacy, satisfaction with life, and parenting stress. The presence of each parenting problem was also examined in relation to recidivism measures based on the number of arrests and convictions for participants ($n = 156$) during the 84-month period after the study began. Finally, the qualitative data from (T1-T3) were used to explore women's parenting ideologies based on their ideas and beliefs about parenting as well as the influences on their beliefs through their experiences and interactions.

Procedures

Sample

Available data are from a subsample of mothers in a longitudinal study of 402 Michigan women on probation or parole for a felony. Between 2011 and 2013, the women were interviewed at three times in three-month intervals starting shortly after supervision began, and

94.3% (379) were retained for the three interviews. Since substance-involved women represent the largest subgroup of justice-involved women (Langan & Pelissier, 2001; Morash, 2010), women were recruited for the study if they had an indication of substance misuse. They also had been supervised on probation or parole for approximately three months, and they had been convicted of a felony. The sample of women was selected from the caseloads of 73 supervision agents recruited from 16 counties within a 1½ hour drive from the research office. The 16 counties included urban, suburban, and rural settings where 68.5% of the state population lived in 2011, when data collection began. Parole agents were oversampled relative to probation agents to bring the proportion of parolees in the sample up to 25%. The sample is racially diverse, but it is limited to one state. It includes 156 mothers who, while they were under supervision, parented children under 18 and participated in qualitative interviews that included open-ended questions about parenting. Official records of arrests and convictions during the 84 months after the study began were collected to assess indications of participants' recidivism. Quantitative measures of psychological well-being were collected for the 98 mothers who participated in a follow-up study approximately three years after the last interview.

Data and Measurement

To collect the data used in the present analysis, women were interviewed three times in the first nine months of supervision (T1-T3), and in a follow-up interview approximately three years later (T4). During the first three interviews, women were asked whether parenting or child custody were problems for them. They were asked to describe these issues and to expand on their discussions with their probation and parole agents regarding these parenting issues. They were also asked to explain whether and why probation and parole agent attention to parenting was adequate, too little, or too much. The qualitative data during these interviews also included

discussions about other common issues for justice-involved women (e.g., resource issues, substance use and mental health problems). These qualitative data were used to identify parenting problems during supervision as well as parenting ideologies, and influences of others, including the supervising agents, on women's parenting ideologies.

At the fourth follow-up interview (T4), four of the five psychological variables were measured with subscales from the Women's Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA). Three of these subscales – *depression/anxiety symptoms*, *anger/hostility*, and *parenting stress* – were measured with *yes* = 1 or *no* = 0 response options (Van Voorhis et al., 2012, 2013). To measure *self-efficacy*, the WRNA incorporated Sherer and colleagues' (1982) 17-item scale, which employed a Likert scale with four response options ranging from *strongly disagree* = 1 to *strongly agree* = 4. *Depression/anxiety symptoms* were measured by six questions regarding women's affirmative responses to recent experiences (e.g., "Having trouble sleeping because you are too worried about things?") ($\alpha = .83$). *Anger/hostility* was measured by women's responses to three questions (e.g. "In recent months, do you have trouble controlling your temper when you get upset?") ($\alpha = .64$). The *parenting stress* scale in the WRNA was developed by Avison and Turner (1986). It includes 12 items that identify women who feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of parenting (e.g. "Raising children is harder than I expected"), and who feel they have limited support in parenting (e.g. "I get little support from my children's father") ($\alpha = .80$). *Self-efficacy* was measured by 17 items (e.g. "Do you feel capable of dealing with most problems that come up in life?") ($\alpha = .87$). The fifth psychological variable *satisfaction with life* ($\alpha = .85$) was also measured during the fourth interview. The *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (Diener et al., 1985) is a widely used measure that asks respondents to rate (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) five items measuring life satisfaction (e.g., "The conditions of my life are excellent"). The data

set also contains measures of recidivism, including arrests and convictions for the 84-month period after the study began.

Analytic Strategy

Coding Parenting Problems. The types of parenting problems that women encountered while on supervision were coded from the qualitative data from the first three interviews with the 156 mothers. Reliability for content on parenting was established for identifying units of analysis by two trained coders for a previous study on this sample (Adams et al., 2017). These units were then coded to identify parenting problem themes by two coders for the current study and adequate thematic reliability was established (Cohen's $\kappa = .87$) (Cohen, 1960). Passages were coded as parenting problems when women explicitly noted that they were experiencing challenges, obstacles, and stressors concerning parenting their children. The rules for coding in these categories are listed in the codebook located in Appendix A. The most common themes include parenting problems women described in relation to (1) resource problems; (2) criminal justice system involvement; (3) substance use, mental health, or physical health problems; (4) negative personal relationships; (5) problems with child custody or contact; (6) problems related to characteristics of children; (7) others' negative relationships with children; (8) neighborhood danger; (9) parenting ideology conflicts. Once coding was completed, Nvivo software was used to generate quantitative data from the qualitative data coded for parenting problems. The quantitative data reflects the presence (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*) of a mention of each type of problem. This allowed for counts and frequencies of the coded data, and examples of each type of parenting problem to be generated for examination.

Coding of Content on Parenting Ideologies. The qualitative data that was unitized for parent-related content were also coded to identify aspects of parenting ideologies and influences

on women's development of their beliefs about parenting to address the second and third research questions. The current coding scheme is listed in the codebook, which is located in Appendix B. Two experienced coders discussed the codebook and coded 20% of the cases separately, and then the dissertation author assessed inter-coder reliability (Cohen, 1960). Themes coded for influence on parenting ideologies are also examined to address the third research question which explores the most common sources that influence justice-involved women's beliefs about parenting. Once adequate reliability was established I coded the remaining cases (Cohen's $\kappa = .84$) (Cohen, 1960).

Quantitative Analysis. The quantitative analyses incorporated examination of the relationships of the dependent variables with the parenting problems to address the two hypotheses. The analyses were run separately for each parenting problem and each dependent variable. Since participants were recruited based on their assignment to supervision agents, the unconditional model for each dependent variable was examined for dependency at the agent-level using HLM software. Values below .50 are considered weak indications of effects on higher order nesting groups, in this case agent-level effects, on outcomes. In other words, an intra-class correlation (ICC) based on variance components higher than .50 indicates that higher order groups predict 50% of the variance in the outcome and hierarchical linear modeling is necessary (Raudenbush and Bryk, 2002). The ICC values indicated that accounting for supervision agent effects was not necessary for any of the dependent variables (Self-efficacy = .0484; Depression/Anxiety = .0057; Anger/Hostility = .1008; Satisfaction with Life = .0821; Parenting Stress = .0675; Arrests = .0032; Convictions = .0034). Self-efficacy, depression/anxiety, anger/hostility, satisfaction with life, and parenting stress are continuous dependent variables. Ordinary least squares regression analyses were used to predict these

variables from each parenting problem and outcome variable representing the mother's well-being. Recidivism measures are count variable with an excess of zero values, so negative binomial regressions were conducted to examine the parenting problems in relation to variables found to be significant in the correlations with the dependent variables.

Again, participants included in the qualitative analysis and quantitative analysis on recidivism include the 156 women on probation or parole who had minor children under 18 at the time of the first interview in 2010. Most ($n = 138$; 88.6%) were on probation and ($n = 18$; 11.4%) were on parole for felony convictions. The majority were unemployed ($n = 130$; 83.3%) at the first interview and most of the mothers in the sample made less than \$10,000 a year at this that time ($n = 133$; 85.3%). Most of the women considered in the qualitative analysis also indicated they were single mothers at the time of the first interview ($n = 134$; 84.6%).

The women in the small subset considered in the quantitative analysis on subsequent psychological well-being include 98 women on probation or parole who had minor children under 18 at the time of the first interview. Most ($n = 81$; 82.7%) were on probation for felony convictions and the remainder were on parole. Similar to the larger sample, the majority reported that they were unemployed ($n = 78$; 79.6%) at the first interview and most of the mothers in the sample made less than \$10,000 a year at this that time ($n = 71$; 72.4 %). Most of the women considered in the qualitative analysis also indicated they were single mothers at the time of the first interview ($n = 65$; 66.3%).

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE RESULTS ON PARENTING PROBLEMS

Justice-Involved Mothers' Parenting Problems

The qualitative accounts from the sample of 156 mothers were coded to address the first research question, "What are the most common types of parenting problems experienced by justice-involved mothers?" Excerpts were coded as parenting problems when the mothers described obstacles they faced in child-rearing or obstacles that child-rearing posed for achieving their desired or required personal goals. Nine different types of parenting problems were identified: (1) resource problems; (2) criminal justice problems; (3) problems with child custody or contact; (4) negative personal relationships; (5) others' negative relationships with children; (6) neighborhood danger; (7) problems of children; (8) substance use, mental health, or physical health problems; and (9) parenting ideology conflicts. Table 1 presents a definition and the number and percent of mothers who discussed each parenting problem type at least once during the qualitative interviews.

Considering the mothers' accounts of all nine types of parenting problems, nearly 88% ($n = 137$) experienced at least one type of parenting problem while they were on community supervision. In fact, most ($n = 132$, 84.62%) of the mothers reported more than one type of parenting problem, and on average they discussed facing four different types of parenting problems while on supervision ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 2.34$). The following review of the qualitative results highlights the unique features of each parenting problem type and demonstrates the common connections amongst the types. The overlaps illustrate the multifaceted and compounding nature of the parenting problems faced by justice-involved mothers.

TABLE 1. Mothers who Discussed Parenting Problem Types ($n = 156$)

Theme	Description	N & % Women
Resource Problems	Resource deficits that interfered with parenting or that resulted from mother's responsibilities as parents (i.e. financial resources, employment, education, housing, transportation, social support).	98 (62.82)
Criminal Justice Problems	Conflicts with the law that complicated parenting or that were complicated by responsibilities as parents (i.e. incarceration, reentry, supervision requirements, systemic justice system problems).	92 (58.97)
Problems with Child Custody or Contact	Problems mothers faced related to child custody and contact.	75 (48.08)
Negative Personal Relationships	Negative interactions and relationships that made child-rearing more difficult for mothers.	82 (52.56)
Others' Negative Relationships with Children	Problems or concerns the mothers faced related to others' potential to negatively influence or harm their children (i.e. negative influences, abusive or toxic relationships).	31 (19.87)
Neighborhood Danger	Problems in parenting due to crime or danger present in the neighborhoods where mothers and their families reside.	15 (9.62)
Problems of Children	Problems in parenting related to characteristics of children such as child behavioral problems, child trauma or mental health issues, and developmental stages of children.	31 (19.87)
Substance Use, Mental Health, or Physical Health Problems	Parenting problems that led to or were prompted by mothers' personal substance use, mental health, and/or physical health issues.	86 (55.13)
Parenting Ideology Conflicts	Problems that resulted from barriers mothers faced in achieving their parenting goals and enacting parenting in ways that were consistent with their beliefs about ideal parenting.	120 (76.92)

Resource Problems

More than 60% ($n = 156$) of the mothers discussed resource deficits that interfered with parenting their children or that stemmed from their responsibilities as parents. Mothers discussed a variety of different resource deficiencies that were problematic in the context of parenting

including financial resources, employment, education, housing, transportation, and social support. Mothers often had to spend their limited time working or looking for work to meet supervision requirements and to provide for their families. This finding was not surprising as community supervision typically involves fees and employment requirements and 75% ($n = 117$) of the women reported that they earned less than \$10,000 per year. For women like Lisa, financial constraints and their need for employment limited the time they could spend with their children. She stated, “I would like to have her more, but I really can’t because of work. I mean, it’s possible for me to have her more, but I really just have to, like, keep on working.” In contrast to Lisa who had to prioritize work over spending time with her child, Janet expressed the inability to obtain employment or resources due to child care responsibilities: “I’ll try to be a stay at home mom, but then the income ... it’s just ... it’s hard. So it’s like, what do you do? It’s kind of like pulling teeth back and forth.” Mothers in the sample experienced similar dilemmas in terms of pursuing an education to meet their career goals and supervision requirements. For instance, Uma explained how she was frustrated with her supervision agent who pressed her to pursue a GED without considering the limited time and resources Uma had for raising her children:

[The supervising agent says] ‘Why is it taking this long?’ And, ‘It doesn’t take that long to take a simple test, and I’m pretty sure if you can spare an extra couple dollars to do something or something like that that you can spare \$30.’ Like I told you, [Supervision Agent]’s very unrealistic about how fast she wants me to do things ... [Supervision Agent] tell me when I have the time to do what [she] want [me] to do. I barely have time to even – some days I don’t even know if I’m going to be able to take a shower and I got puked and pooped on! I don’t have time. And it’s like you need to understand – and it’s like she doesn’t have kids. Well maybe you should have one and see what I’m doing.

As mothers’ employment or schooling needs limited the time they could dedicate to children or childcare responsibilities and prevented mothers’ from pursuing their own needs and supervision requirements, these problems often related to the limited or absent social support

they had to raise their children. This is not surprising as most mothers in the sample were single parents with a limited social network ($n = 105$, 67.3%). For example, Maxine described the challenges of being a single mother and its impact on providing support for her: “I’m a single parent here. I have no relatives here in Jackson, so ... just knowing ... It was a struggle at first. And coming out after being incarcerated for a year and doing the treatments in there for three months, I came out and I didn’t know which direction to go to.” Likewise, Kylie also reflected on the difficulty she faced due to the lack of available support due to the antisocial and unsupportive individuals in her network:

I see how my mother, [Children’s Father]’s mother, my sister, [Children’s Father]’s brothers ... and I see how they ... the family fucked up. I can’t trust them fuckers to have my back with my kids when y’all didn’t have my back through their father’s death, through their mother’s alcohol condition ... even up till now. Everybody wants the fucking title but nobody wants to play the role.

A lack of prosocial support was especially problematic for mothers with inadequate incomes and for mothers who were ineligible for public assistance to help provide for themselves and their children. In the following example Raven reflected on the challenges she faced after being cut off from public assistance:

I’m a single mom so I have to show that I’m strong through whatever... period. I have to show that whatever I go through I can still take care of my kids. But I was to a point where me and my five kids was about to get put out. I don’t get AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children], I don’t get public assistance, I’m one of the families that was cut off.

In the face of limited resources some women felt the need to make sacrifices or work harder to balance their children’s needs in addition to their own needs. As an illustration, Shay, explained how her limited financial resources for supporting her children as a single parent were drained by her supervision fees. She asserted as a “single mother, you know, not making enough hours at work. You know, barely got enough money to pay my fines, so yeah.” Shay further

described the necessity to forego meeting her personal needs in order to ensure her children were able to eat due to the inadequate amount of food assistance she received,

... the \$100 I get really doesn't do much for me and my son when I only bring home 500 bucks a month. But at the same time, you know, I'm not trying to be greedy either. Like I'll go without a meal before my son will. I'll eat crackers, if my son eats the meat. I've cut up the food on my plate before to give it to kids.

Shay demonstrates how resource constraints prompted some women to adapt their notions about ideal parenting to include extreme self-sacrifice to provide for their children. Women's resource problems not only provoked women's strenuous efforts and their personal sacrifices to raise children, but they also described how resource problems led to their negative feelings such as guilt, shame, and inadequacy related to parenting. For instance, Sasha, articulated an incident she encountered with a fraudulent landlord:

I'm paying rent and everything and we found out he don't own the house. So I moved out of that place and I moved to another place. So now it's kind of hard because, I couldn't move the kid's school, it being so late in the year. So every day I have to catch the bus back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

In addition to dealing with housing instability and the need to navigate the difficult and time-consuming process of transporting her children to school, Sasha blamed herself for victimization by the landlord, saying " ... because it's like, I messed up, so now my kids got to suffer."

Sasha's descriptions show how women struggle to garner the necessary resources to raise their children and how they can carry feelings of guilt when inadequate resources result in consequences for their children. Like Sasha, women's negative feelings due to the pain experienced by their children often overlapped with the mothers' guilt associated with personal mistakes. These mistakes included being subject to legal punishments that reduced the resources they had to support their children.

Criminal Justice Problems

Women often described how their parenting problems stemmed from their experiences of incarceration, reentry, supervision, and having a felony record. Nearly 60% ($n = 92$) of the mothers discussed parenting problems that were associated with their involvement with the criminal justice system. Incarceration and other forms of separation from children that derived from women's trouble with the law, such as requirements to attend residential treatment, were serious sources of distress for mothers in the sample. Some women disclosed the longstanding affliction due to separation from their children and their concern over the difficult situations children endured without proper care and protection. Lana gave an account of the negative impact of separation from her children as she recounted her concern over the problems that erupted in her children's lives while she was in jail:

They spent four months without their mom ... There were a number of different delusions going on in the family that they were stuck with They were stuck with a person of immense mental and emotional instability. And there's a lot of scarring at this point that we're still dealing with because of the things that transpired while I was in jail. My youngest daughter ended up trying to commit suicide on a few different occasions.

Many mothers specifically stated how incarceration and separation served as sources of distress due to the repercussions their children and their families faced. Sky's account echoed this theme with her statement that when one is incarcerated, "everybody that cares about you, everybody that loves you is in jail with you; they're doing their time with you." Women's accounts also showed how children's presence during the time of arrest resulted in parenting problems. This is apparent in Ester's reflection of the harm that her family experienced when the police raided their home and arrested her:

I have four children I've raised for 14 years by myself. I lost them for eight months ... [The Police] came in with all my kids here, and we're all in the bedroom watching a movie ... and scared the crap out of all my kids. Tore their rooms up and everything. Like, who does that? All the neighbors are outside like, 'What's going on?'

Experiences on community supervision such as requirements and challenges of complying with orders set by the court also led to parenting problems for many of the mothers in the sample. Accounts by Shay, Uma, and Maxine in the previous section on resource problems exhibit how inadequate resources regularly resulted in a clash between mothers' responsibilities for their children and their personal needs such as meeting their supervision requirements. Janet depicts struggles described by mothers who felt emotional and financial constraints on parenting and moving on with their lives due to supervision requirements:

It frightens me because I feel like I can't live my life ... I have this thing on my shoulders just kind of holding me down for me being able to go out and work and enjoy you know coming in and being able to take my kids somewhere, you know, with the financial situation. So, it's kind of like a big burden.

Several mothers described how parenting with limited resources made meeting requirements like paying fees even more impractical when they were paired with other orders such as staying away from people with a felony record. These women discussed how this combination of orders was unrealistic for them because it eliminated necessary sources of support for child-rearing, specifically relatives with felony records. Micah reflects on the challenges of juggling parenting and her supervision requirements without the assistance from her children's father, who was also convicted of a felony:

Because it's just, it's hard for me to have a babysitter. And then I tried to go and do childcare with DHS and they're just a long waiting process. And it's like I don't have the money to keep having people watch him and keep my son or whatever. So it's kind of hard to keep attending and stay on the attendance, and go to work, you know, and be at home with them. So it be like, it's a big problem, you know [T]hat's why like, I was telling her, like, as far ... [as] what happened to me and my son's dad, it was messed up [T]hat had nothing to do with him being a father, you know what I mean?, I don't know what to do. And then now [Supervision Agent] telling me that I can't even be around him for my son. And I'm like, that don't make sense. [Supervision Agent] was like, "Well, the court order is, ... he got to be a certain amount of feet away from you." And I'm like, "Okay, well what about his son though?" You know, from the fact that we – he was going to court for putting his hands on me, that's – and I didn't show. They're

like, “Well, you can’t be around her period, due to the fact that this happened” That’s really kind of messing me up.

In Micah’s account, it is apparent that she was frustrated with the wider criminal justice system as well as with her supervision agent’s lack of consideration of her need for social support from her child’s father. For other women, such requirements and orders led to their lack of compliance and sometimes with their failure on supervision.

Nearly nine percent of the mothers discussed how parenting responsibilities or frustrations prompted them to relapse or reoffend. Isabell depicted this problem:

I was like, “This is what I have to do to raise my kids; this is what I have to do to survive. I can’t get a job.” Because previously I have... I’m convicted for drugs, selling drugs out of my house. So I can’t go out and get a job, you know what I mean, because of the background checks. This is the way I was thinking in my head, you know – okay, where are we going – so much. I don’t know. I’m stuck. I’m stuck with the question ... I really don’t. I don’t know if it’s because I was doing it for so long and it just finally caught up to me or it was because of the drugs that I was taking, that I needed that time to sit down. And like I say, my daughter had just given birth to my granddaughter, my first grandbaby, my 16-year-old child, I got my kids out here stealing with me.

Some women described how parenting problems generated from wider systemic criminal justice issues led to their struggles on supervision. For instance, when asked if she was under a lot of stress, Hazel discussed how systemic issues that treat mothers and fathers differently led to her struggles paying child support to gain custody of her children and eventually to her relapse. She explained:

Right, plus I’m working three jobs. The judge isn’t throwing him in jail for no payment of child support but the minute I get out of jail they expect me to go to work, pay, you know, double what he was supposed to pay but he ain’t paying but now I’m supposed to pay just to even get my kids back. So right there, first thing is resentment. I mean ... doesn’t make sense. Had he been court ordered to pay the child support that he was ordered to pay all along, I would have never been that stressed out.

In another example Maggie discussed the difficulty she had with meeting both requirements for supervision and for regaining custody, “I wrote a letter to the judge and I told

her, I think the court set me up for failure. I can't work six days a week, 12 hours a night, drug tests five days a week, go to seven meetings, plus do out-patient, plus do therapy, plus see my kids once a week. It was impossible." These accounts illustrate a common sentiment expressed by women who felt the criminal justice system "set them up for failure" by hindering their ability to successfully parent and achieve supervision requirements.

Problems with Child Custody or Contact

Nearly half ($n = 75$) of the women in the sample reported experiencing a problem with gaining desired custody and contact with their children. It is clear that time and financial constraints related to criminal justice system involvement compounded many women's struggles with child-rearing, and often also impacted their ability to maintain contact with and custody of their children. Maggie and Hazel's reflections demonstrate how community supervision requirements can complicate women's efforts to spend time with and gain custody of their children. These, often highly emotional descriptions, reveal how distraught many of the women were due to separation from their children. Jaclyn's account captured the draining process of fighting to regain child custody as well as the distress mothers and children often felt during separation:

I'm in the process of fighting for getting full custody back. They gave [Son's Father] full physical custody and we had joint legal custody. So [Son], that's the first time he really has had to do anything with his dad, and I want him back because he cries because he wants his mom. And I want him, too [*cries*].

Some women explained the profound stress they experienced in the face of compounding problems related to child custody (i.e. separation from children, child custody battles, child support receipt or payment) led them to relapse or continue committing crimes.

In addition to grief, women also conveyed their feelings of regret and guilt because their actions led to the separation between them and their children. Self-blame for separation was common

and Kimberly depicted such feelings when she said, “I’m stressed because I can’t see them right now, because they’re like my world. It’s another reason why I’m really ticked at myself for getting involved with drugs cause’ I would never do that. I don’t know what happened.”

Women often mentioned that other people, such as the child’s caregiver or workers in the justice system, threatened or impeded their ability to obtain contact or custody of their children. Jamie described intense stress related to her recent release from prison and her inability to parent her children due to restrictions by the State and her child’s caregiver:

It’s more of the fact of me trying to get [Daughter] back from me being out of prison and it’s hard because now I have to go through all of this and I feel trapped. It’s really ... I’m trying to be a parent to my child but I’m not being allowed by the State and my sister. I almost had a nervous breakdown like ... I’m like ... I need help ... I’m out here and I’m stressed out, I’m depressed, I don’t got my baby, I don’t got nobody.

Some mothers who had custody described how others such as those who had shared custody with them, their children’s fathers, and even the criminal justice system attempted to sabotage their parental rights. For instance, Julia described how her child’s father would call Child Protective Services (CPS) in his attempt to jeopardize her child custody rights:

One of my biggest issues is my youngest daughter’s dad because he’s very manipulative. And very ... he’s the type that’ll, like, tell you a lie to try to get a response out of you, like, to see what you’re going to say. It’s so stupid. I know when he does it, because half the time he says stuff – I mean, he wants, he really wants to paint me as this horrible person. I did some bad things, okay? I’m not going to deny that. I shouldn’t have done that and I don’t make light of what I did either, but he just – he still wants – he wants me to be that horrible person I think so that he can tell everybody in his life, “I’m the good one, she’s the bad one.” And I’m not letting him do that and I think it really infuriates him because he doesn’t have anything on me. He called Child Protective Services on me, like, two months ago or three months ago or something like that, and said that I left our daughter home alone and that she was using the stove and all sorts of stuff and, you know, it was completely-- they closed it out – it was completely unfounded.

Relatedly Shay portrayed how her child’s father would call her and threaten to call her supervision agent to sabotage her custody, “[Child’s Father] calls me up and tries telling me all

kinds of things will go down, like one time he called and told me that I was a bad mom and because of my situation with probation that I was going to lose my son.”

Negative Personal Relationships

As Jamie, Julia, and Shay indicated, child custody problems sometimes involved issues women had with children’s caregivers or problems mothers experienced making or receiving child custody payments. Although negative personal relationships sometimes involved child custody problems and problems women had with accessing prosocial support to raise their children, negative interactions and relationships emerged as a distinct type of problem that made child-rearing more difficult for 53% ($n = 82$) of the mothers in the sample. Personal relationships or interactions were coded as parenting problems when mothers described how they generated consequences for their parenting or their relationships with their children. The women explained how their negative interactions with others or their relationships with antisocial individuals triggered negative feelings, unstable living situations, and deleterious personal experiences (i.e. victimization, trauma, mental health problems, cravings or relapse, continued offending) that threatened the mothers’ capacity to parent and successfully complete supervision requirements. Uma shed light on how a negative relationship with her child’s grandmother resulted in her and her child’s unstable living situation:

Me and [Child’s Father]’s mother, we absolutely hate each other ... can’t stand each other. She kicked me out. We were staying with her when I first had the baby, she kicked me out at two-weeks-old – when the baby was two weeks old – told me to get the hell out of her house with a two-week-old baby and tried to attack me physically.

In addition to disrupting living circumstances and sabotaging mothers’ custody of children, women in the sample explained how others confronted them with criticism and negative comments that compromised their parenting. Many mothers like Shay, described how others’ judgement of them as “bad mothers” due to their mistakes and involvement with the law

jeopardized both their contact with children and their identities as parents. Some women also revealed how physically and emotionally abusive relationships imperiled their ability to parent by creating negative feelings (i.e. humiliation, shame, anger) that enticed them to engage in prohibited behaviors such as physical retaliation or using substances to ease emotional pain. Sally described the cravings she had for alcohol due to a negative interaction, and she discussed how a relapse and eventual violation of supervision could have consequences for her children who were living with her at the time:

My little sister's birthday was last month. That one that I told you that died. And I wanted to get fucked up so bad that day. Her mom kept talking shit to me. I saw her at the store she was like, "Don't fucking speak to me! You killed my daughter!" And I was just looking at her like, "Why are you lying like that? You crack-head ass, go hit another rock." I was like, "Oh, I'd better go get me a shot. I was like, "You know what, fuck it, I can get drunk for her birthday when I get off papers," because if I get drunk right now, that tether go crazy and be at my house with my kids here, so.

Some women explained their obligations to maintain negative relationships with their children's caregivers and fathers, and they described how these relationships caused them stress and sometimes placed them at risk for violating supervision. When asked if her sentence was fair Sadie said it was unfair because it put her in the situation of having to continue a negative relationship with her child's father so that she could maintain contact with their son:

I think they should've looked more into the case on his part, you know. They never asked me my story. They never asked me my side of the story. They just went on his part, his side of the story. Because I'm guessing, before this case I did have another domestic violence with him which the allegations was true so I figure that's why they just believed him this time ... I just settled for the charges, because I had just started back to working. I was going to get evicted, light, gas, water everything was going to just come to an end so I didn't have time to take to keep going back to court so I just took the plea. ... I have to communicate with him because we have a child together and the child is in his home and that gives him a good upper on everything. So that perplexes me that they would just suddenly allow him to go pick her up from my mother's house, order him to pay voluntary child support through her, never taking it to court, but my mother took me to court for child support. I think she knew who the bread winner was. Secondly, I think that's pretty crooked that our system would choose to do that, and CPS would not be opened up on a case on him and his children in a tent at his friend's house while they

partied all night. No, my daughter's been taken over, slept on a couch at a bachelor home where a 17-year-old girl died because they gave her Oxycontin's and some other drugs, overdosed, and this is where he's been allowed to take my child for what, over a year now? Yeah, and who's making the decision that it's okay? My mother – who drinks alcohol which is exactly what they don't want me to do.

Sadie portrays how toxic relationships with family and the family of children's fathers compound with other problems mothers encounter in relation to resources, criminal justice system involvement, and child custody. Lacking prosocial support and having toxic relationships can hinder justice-involved mothers as they attempt to complete supervision requirements and pursue law-abiding roles in society. Toxic relationships with others can also develop for children and result in problems for justice-involved mothers.

Others' Negative Relationships with Children

Nearly 20% ($n = 31$) of the participants mentioned that others' negative influences or relationships with their children concerned them or made child-rearing more difficult. Most often these problems were rooted in relationships the children had with their fathers, caregivers, or other family members. For instance, Ivy discussed how she needed to prevent their son from associating with his father:

I let [Son] go with [Son's Father] and [Son] come home, 'I hate [N-Words].' Well we live in Flint and half the kids at my kids' school are Black. I can't have my son going – 'You trying to get him killed, are you serious?' And then he started acting out in school for like two weeks. Yeah, and he has never acted out ever, not even at home. So I was like, 'Nope, never again.'

In another example, Daria described how her son's grandmother's negative remarks about her made her parenting more problematic, "[S]he's a kind of vindictive woman she'll make remarks about me to get to me but it doesn't bother me, but it bothers him [son]. So, I guess it does bother me because she's bothering him."

Negative relationships with others can result in a variety of negative outcomes for children and in turn influence the well-being and outcomes of justice-involved mothers. This theme is sometimes related to child custody issues and a mother's struggle to manage alleged parental abuse or inconsistent parenting styles among other caregivers. Negative relationships and inconsistent parenting styles also could result in children's misbehaviors resulting in mothers' negative feelings and sometimes their own negative reactions such as relapse or inappropriate confrontations.

Neighborhood Danger

It is evident that threats within social networks and communities triggered obstacles for some of the mothers by limiting their ability to acquire needed support or by requiring them to expend extensive energy monitoring their children and protecting them from others. Nearly 10% ($n = 15$) of the mothers mentioned parenting problems related to danger in their neighborhoods. Participants weren't specifically asked about the difficulties of parenting due to neighborhood danger, therefore the participants' accounts of this parenting problem were brought up spontaneously which signifies the pervasive nature of such problems in their daily lives. Raven illustrated how neighborhood threats prompted some mothers' concern for their children's well-being as well as their exhausting efforts to protect their children by monitoring their associates and activities:

I promise [to put my children] in a program every day, because it's just so much going on out here and I feel like my boys they would pick up on the negativity more than my girls. I really try to keep them in a church program or something, just anything to do, just don't be in the streets because my son like, one of his little friends that he grew up with, the little boy smokes weed, he's breaking in houses. ... The only time I come outside is to job search or walk the kids to the center. I don't let them go by theyself. Before they used to go by theyself but because of the shootings, I walk them. When we go down there we inside the center because they have, like the recreation inside but it's a basketball court and a track and all that on the outside. Now I walk them down there if they want to go

and I'll sit down there until they get done in the rec center or whatever and we walk back home.

In another example Kate described how she taught her daughter strategies she used to avoid victimization in their neighborhood. She explained when walking outside and confronted with people, “Say hi to them. Don’t be acting like you’re stuck up, or prejudice or something, because then they’re not going to like you.” Kate suggests that avoidance of others can put you at risks in their neighborhood, therefore being out in the neighborhood requires a balancing act where quick decisions need to be made on how to respond to others while also maintaining distance. Women like Rely described their desire to move to safer communities and her use of weapons to protect herself and children while traversing the neighborhoods:

Try to find a better place because I know my kids getting tired of being on John R. ... Well I’m gonna tell you like it is and I’m ... I can’t have no gun, so I take a knife, put it in my pocket. That way if I gotta get out there at six o’clock in the morning ... walk my daughters to the bus stop. They gotta be at that bus stop at 6:37am ... so they get that bus. So I take my knife and put it in my pocket. I give them one – each one of them ... a knife. When you all walking on your way to school – or to the bus stop they ... so when the bus come they pass them over to me and I go back in.

It is evident in the explanation of the findings regarding parenting ideologies that some mothers felt the need to be on guard to protect children from physical and moral harms in their communities. Although only a small percentage of mothers specifically described the difficulties of parenting children in dangerous neighborhood, the accounts from these mothers exhibit the intense fear and adaptations required for mothers to keep their children safe.

Problems of Children

More than a quarter ($n = 31$) of the mothers discussed problems related to child development or children’s special needs. The subthemes included child misbehavior and delinquency, child trauma and mental health issues, child physical health problems, and child’s

developmental stage. For instance, Leslie discussed the problems she faced raising her teenage daughter:

[Teenage Daughter] just calling, “Can I come home from school?” But she’s 17, so she thinks she’s grown, so she wanted to go out last night and I’m like, “Okay.” She didn’t come home.” She didn’t come home to get ready for school this morning. Went to school and she gets to school, calls like, “Can I come home? I think I have a UTI [urinary tract infection].” And I’m like, “No! You’re grown and chose to stay out all night long, so you’re staying in school.” I’m ... ugh, it’s the whole boy thing.

In some cases, children’s issues involved mental health problems stemming from trauma related to conditions that led to the mother’s justice-system involvement or directly from the women’s negative behavior and involvement with the justice system. As noted above, Ester’s children were traumatized by witnessing her arrest and the police search of their home, “[The Police] came in with all my kids here ... and scared the crap out of all my kids. Tore their rooms up and everything.” Kylie also described the traumatic impact of her criminal justice involvement on her children and how witnessing her being handcuffed traumatized her kids. She exclaimed, “I wish I could change that image of them seeing they momma handcuffed in the back of a police car. They [were] crying.” Mothers also described trauma related to living circumstances and the negative impact of others in their lives. Lana explained the trauma her kids experienced from their father’s suicide: “ ... the big [issue] primarily is [Deceased Husband R] committing suicide, and [me] telling the kids, ‘You know, we can wallow in it [or talk about it] and ... we do. [W]e go through why, what was he thinking, how selfish [it was] and go through all of that sort of stuff.’” Mothers in the sample described the need to address children’s experiences of trauma as they recognized how these experiences could manifest into children’s mental health issues and behavioral problems which can impact the entire family.

Nearly a quarter of the justice-involved mothers specifically described parenting problems related to children’s behavioral problems or delinquency. For instance, 1190 discussed

trying new parenting techniques she learned from her supervision agent to address her daughter's delinquency:

They [daughter and another girl] got into an argument about hair ... my daughter said the girl hit her and [Daughter] decided she was gonna snip her ponytail. My daughter is kind of a bully, and at times I don't know how to deal with her, and I tend to just yell off on her instead of talking to find out the real problem. [Supervising Agent] was telling me, 'Maybe just sit down and talk to her instead of punishing her every time the school says that.' So, I've been working on that, it's been working okay.

In a more dire situation related to her young child's delinquency, Kim described her need to drop out of school because one of her twins was trying to kill her other twin and she felt like she would be blamed for the harm inflicted:

But that twin, she was doing some really bad things to where she took the pillow and tried to smother her twin, so I cut the school out. I got so much pressure on me ripping and running with them, taking them to school, going to my classes ... it's kind of heavy. If I don't take care of the stuff that's going on right now, I'll be in trouble. 'Cause what if I come home and she been suffocated her, I'm going to jail for that. You know they put everything on the parents, so I'm trying to deal with and see what's going on in her mind.

These examples show just a few ways in which children's problems related to their developmental stage, their behavioral problems, and their struggles with trauma and mental health can provoke and exacerbate problems for justice-involved mothers. These examples also show how the challenges associated with children's problems were especially problematic for mothers facing other parenting problems such as having resource problems, struggles with personal mental health, and risks for getting in trouble with the law.

Substance Use, Mental Health, or Physical Health Problems

Fifty-five percent ($n = 86$) of mothers mentioned how their parenting was either hindered or was impeded by their struggles with a substance use, mental health, or physical health problems. Cadence described how her children's behavior intensified her issues with anxiety:

I have real bad anxiety issues. And, my kids, like purposely do things to stress me out. Because they think it's funny, because I really am serious, like, scared. And, I don't even

know how to explain it, but they think it's funny and it's really not. Like when I'm all kinds of meds, serious meds, and yeah. I had five kids at one time, because I had two step kids before I left my husband ... I had two step kids and then [Daughter A] and then my two, and when I had five kids. And they would just ... they would actually plot. Like one time, they all went in my bedroom and hid, and popped out at once, and scared me, yeah ... I would like cry. I would like [*fake laughs*], and then sit and cry because they scared me so bad. And they thought it was funny.

In contrast to Cadence whose mental health problems worsened due to her living arrangement with multiple children who treated her poorly, Julia described how her shared custody and parental insecurity led her to relapse and to fail a drug test for parole: "I had a dirty drop. I had a really bad week that week and my youngest daughter – I share custody of her with her father and he's got a live-in girlfriend and I found out that week that she'd been calling her 'Mommy.'" These examples exhibit how personal problems can be magnified by women's struggles with justice system involvement, accessing vital resources, obtaining child custody, and maintaining their maternal identity.

Parenting Ideology Conflicts

The final and most common parenting problem type involved conflicts that prevented mothers from achieving their parenting goals or that made their pursuit of ideal parenting particularly difficult. More than 75% ($n = 120$) of the mothers in the sample reported experiencing at least one conflict with their parenting goals or with their beliefs about proper child-rearing. Since the participants consistently discussed how other circumstances triggered conflicts with their parenting goals and ideologies, conflicts typically corresponded with at least one of the other eight types of parenting problems. In other words, challenging parenting circumstances signified by the other eight themes, such as justice-involved women's common struggles with incarceration and addiction, served as impediments for achieving their goals as parents. For example, Julia, who discussed how her substance abuse issues were triggered by

problems with child custody, also described how her struggles with substance use and incarceration made her feel like a failure as a mother:

I feel like such a failure sometimes when it comes to my kids because I was drug addict – I am drug addict. But I was an active drug addict before my incarceration and when I got out of prison, I felt like a failure because I went to prison and left my kids behind for a year and, you know, my – it kills me. My youngest daughter tells me all the time, “I remember when I met you,” because she doesn’t remember me before I came home.

In addition to feelings of failure and guilt for being unable to care for children, mothers also described the need to make up for prior parenting mistakes by being a better parent. This was often an onerous task given the common overlap with the other parenting problem themes. In addition to being difficult, mothers also often felt like failures when they perceived the rigorous effort they had to put forth failed. The review of qualitative results for the other parenting problem types and the following review of parenting ideology types provide further evidence of the pervasive strain justice-involved mothers experienced due to the obstacles they faced in meeting their goals as parents.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE RESULTS ON PARENTING IDEOLOGIES

Valuable information regarding parenting problems and the nature and sources that influenced mother's development of parenting ideologies were uncovered during the analysis of the qualitative data to address the second and third research questions. The qualitative coding of parenting ideologies was conducted to better understand justice-involved mothers' beliefs about parenting and the influences on these beliefs to address the second and third research questions. This portion of the coding was exploratory, and the themes are not included in the quantitative regression analyses on the outcome variables. The findings from this study are consistent with extant literature. Specifically, this study found evidence that justice-involved mothers' focus on beliefs about parenting was largely ideals consistent with intensive parenting ideologies (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Granja et al., 2015; Opsal, 2009). However, their strategies to meet these expectations were often adapted to respond to their marginalized circumstances and their troubled parental experiences. This conclusion was made based on the coding of parenting goals and beliefs that were consistent with intensive parenting ($n = 138$) and based on alternative parenting goals and beliefs that deviated from intensive parenting beliefs highlighted in research on general populations ($n = 58$). Interestingly, some of the goals and beliefs that were consistent with intensive parenting were sometimes distinct from research on general populations based on the methods justice-involved mothers discussed for meeting these goals. This study shows how justice-involved mothers in this sample aimed to meet intensive parenting expectations while also attempting to circumvent numerous parenting problems linked to their criminal justice system involvement and their social and economic marginalization.

Intensive Parenting Ideologies

Intensive parenting ideologies (**RQ2**) were identified for nearly 93% ($n = 145$) of the justice-involved mothers based on mothers' beliefs, goals, and behaviors regarding parenting that were consistent with intensive parenting themes identified in research on middle class mothers from general populations. The review of the qualitative data also displays how justice-involved mothers' strategies to meet intensive parenting expectations often emphasized features that were unique from those highlighted by the general population due to justice involved mothers' common struggles (i.e. extreme self-sacrifice, requirements to take parenting classes, providing consistent discipline due to personal mistakes and inconsistent caregiving circumstances, making up for perceived parental failures and rectifying tarnished maternal identities). Table 2 displays the definition of each theme as well as the number and percentage of mothers who discussed each theme. For each intensive parenting theme, examples that are consistent with prior research on general populations are reviewed and then examples of unique features of intensive parenting for justice-involved mothers are discussed.

TABLE 2. Examples and Number of Mothers who Discussed Intensive Parenting Ideologies ($n = 156$)

<u>Parenting Ideology</u>	Description	n & % Women
Intensive Parenting	Beliefs that reflect intensive parenting expectations.	145 (92.95)
Child-Centered	Beliefs that parents should make sacrifices for children and act in accordance with their children's best interests.	138 (88.46)
Child-Centered for Personal Reasons	Beliefs that children guide their positive behaviors and/or their motivations to make positive personal changes.	134 (85.90)
All-Consuming	Beliefs that parenting, including efforts to maintain or regain child custody, is or should be strenuous and exhausting.	82 (52.56)
Fulfillment	Beliefs that parenting should be fulfilling and central to a parent's identity	77 (49.36)
Traits of Good Parents or Bad Parents	Comparison between good and bad parents or defining positive or negative parenting.	56 (35.90)
Stimulation	Beliefs that parents should stimulate children as they develop	48 (30.77)
Essentialism	Beliefs that women are inherently better at caregiving	25 (16.03)

Child-Centered

The most common intensive parenting theme, child-centered, was discussed by nearly 90% (n = 138) of the mothers. This theme encompassed mothers' need to cater parenting to children's needs and to make personal sacrifices for children's well-being (i.e., spending time with children, listening to children, sacrificing personal relationships and opportunities, providing consistent and positive forms of discipline, consuming material and expending resources to improve parenting practices). Several mothers discussed how obligations to raise young children and multiple children led them to sacrifice their personal goals. When asked if she had educational goals Leigh said, "Yeah, I would love to ... I think when my girls get bigger ... when I think I can actually take it on. I mean I don't think right now I could take on school, too. You know, being a full-time mom, raising a family ... I couldn't do it." In another example Adele described how she had to sacrifice employment due to her pregnancy and her caregiving responsibilities for several young children:

I'm not working, and I have, like, an 18-month-old baby, now I'm pregnant again. I have two older ones too. And they all live with us, you know, me and their dad. So I take care of them full time ... And I ... yeah, I am such, like a hands-on mom, I wouldn't want to pursue it because it would take me away from them right now. You know and they wouldn't know what to do if I went back to work or if they had to go to daycare, you know; they'd fall apart ... I mean I could [have] had my days where I could have went back to work. But then I had her – which I couldn't change so now I am kind of starting all over again. You know, she won't be in school for another five year – so in five years [laughs].

Similar to the general population Adele had to choose between being the primary caregiver of her children and pursuing employment. Since women typically provide primary care for their children prior to incarceration (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008) and single mothers represent a majority (73.3%) of women in this sample, the hardships of single, justice-involved mothers are imperative to understand. There are obvious parallels to the experiences of single mothers who

aren't at odds with the law given that single mothers are the most vulnerable population (Allard, 2002; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Seaman & Lynch, 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2018).

However, justice-involved mothers typically carry extra burdens including supervision requirements and increased likelihood of facing arrest and harsh punishments for violating the law, even when their violations are related to their struggles raising children (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Seng and Lurigio; 2005; Van Voorhis et al., 2012; 2013).

A comparable child-centered strategy for the justice-involved mothers and mothers in the general population is apparent in an excerpt by Gia. When asked what she had done to make her life better since starting supervision Gia said, "... kept busy in a parenting class to better understand [my] son as a teenager." Similarly, Egypt discussed how a parenting program helped her learn about her daughter's personality and improve their interactions, "I mean it helped a whole lot especially with [Daughter], understanding her personality to begin with and how polar opposite ... our personalities are. And how to interact with each other and move forward, it's been really good."

Although intensive parenting ideologies were embedded in goals consistent with those identified in research on intensive parenting for general samples of mothers such as raising children based on the children's specific needs, the data showed that justice-involved mothers felt they needed to adapt their parenting practices to address the unique parenting problems they faced. Specifically the most common parenting ideology, child-centered, comprised several subthemes mothers felt were necessary to counter their parenting problems such as limited resources, criminal justice system involvement, antisocial social networks, and neighborhood dangers (i.e. sacrificing personal needs or justice-related obligations, staying out of trouble, child protection from danger and antisocial influences, being a positive role model, being the only

suitable caretaker for their children). To illuminate such strategies, Raven reflected on her need to stay out of trouble and shield her children from negativity in their community by being a positive role model for them:

So now if I wanted to I can retreat back to the old me but why? I feel like I have to show my kids something different. Like I can't show them the bad parts of Jackson, I have to show them something else. I taught my daughters so there will never be a repeat of what happened to me, you know what I mean. My daughter is gunna be 18, her baby daddy got killed when I was five months pregnant so I never really had that, in the beginning, nobody to help me out, nobody to get up and make bottles with me, nobody to change a diaper or none of that.

Mothers' struggles related to their substance use, their encounters in dangerous neighborhoods, and their legal troubles also influenced women's adaptive strategies for achieving ideal parenting. In an illustration Yolanda said, "I go and I see [son] and I talk to him. I tried to tell him about the streets, 'You don't want to end up where we at.'" In a similar example, Ann discussed her need to avoid trouble in the city so she could be present for her child, "Instead of going to the city to get dope, I gotta be there when he's at school because before I would have just called my mom or dad and been like, 'Hey, pick him up from school.' Now it's ... I want to be there. He wants me there."

Relatedly, women in the sample often discussed the limited opportunities children had and the consequences children would face if they as mothers continued substance use and getting in trouble with the law. For example, Hailey reflected on her need to stay out of trouble because she was all her children had:

My daughter's dad since has passed so not only – I mean our whole family is boom gone. Her dad passed a year after, so I mean after ... you know I come back, you know I've been back here now for a year but... and he's been gone now two and half years so I mean, I mean it really... you know coming back from Florida to be a mom again, and I was only back for three months before he passed and they were real close so I had to make sure – I had to do everything the right way, I couldn't have any more screw-ups or do anything stupid because I'm all she has.

Kylie described a similar sentiment as she saw herself as the only person capable of raising her children due to the death of her children's father:

My children lost they father and I didn't have nobody else, it wouldn't be nobody else if they took me and locked me up. It wouldn't be nobody else to take care of them the way I would. So I got a second chance in life, you know, and I look at that and let me tell you this much, that look on my kids face when the police took their mother away ... that's two looks, the first look was when they watched they daddy collapse at home, you understand.

Sometimes women described the absence of potential caregivers, while others mentioned how other potential caregivers posed as a negative influence or a threat on them and their children. When asked about negative relationships Alexis said, "I do not want to be with nobody right now! Even the daddy of this baby ... just stay away from me! [*Laughs*] ... it's about my kids now ... I've had my fun." It's interesting that Alexis compares her new need to take responsibility of children and by avoiding negative relationships and having "fun". This illustrates how some women sacrifice their personal notions of fun due to their need to support their children. Shame due to prior parenting failures and concerns about children's well-being also influenced justice-involved women's distinctive child-centered beliefs. Sky explained motivations to avoid crime due to another common concern that children would serve the time with them:

Everybody that cares about you, everybody that loves you is in jail with you; they're doing their time with you." So that's something that stuck out, I think about that every time someone says, "Hey, let's go do this or that," if there's a chance to get in trouble... my kid's not going back to jail with me. I'm not gunna let that happen again ... Even if you're just a kid, somebody's kid. Your parents are doing that time with you. They gotta put money on the phone, they gotta give you money to do this, they gotta do that, they gotta come see you in jail. You know, it's not fun. It's not fun for anybody.

Sky describes how the separation from children and family can be harmful, but also how the challenges and stress involved in visitation while incarcerated causes family to feel similar distress and can be problematic for caregivers and children who have limited resources.

Other problems that children could face motivated mothers to stay out of trouble including the judgement and interpersonal consequences children could suffer due to their continued trouble with the law. This is apparent in Leigh's motivation to improve so her children were not isolated from social events:

It was important to me to succeed and do all this because I didn't want my kids to have to pay for my mistakes. [Daughter] have ... like this one friend where she said, you know, 'Mom can [Daughter's Friend] stay over?' And I said yes, but [Daughter's Friend's Parents] said, 'No,' because I was their mom. So, it was important to me to make like the right decisions since I have some credibility under my belt now.

Sky also detailed how the personal shame and the challenges her son would face with her continued legal troubles motivated her to stay out of trouble:

I don't want my three year old running around saying, "My mom's in jail." I wasn't proud of that, it didn't make me feel good. It doesn't make me feel good for my kids to look at me and say, "Mommy I don't want you to go back to jail." That don't feel good at all; and the only thing you can say to them is, "I'm not going to, I'm trying not to." Because you can't guarantee tomorrow, I can't tell you that tomorrow I might not wake up and ... I don't know ... get into a fight with a girl, beat her up and get an assault, you don't know. But, I know that today I'm gunna try my darndest not to and I will be the mom you need, other than that what else is there in life?

The discussion from Sky also revealed how she perceived trouble with the law was sometimes out of her control which in-turn placed her role as a parent in jeopardy. Sky's uncertainty regarding justice system involvement and experiences with negative individuals prompted her to exert effort to stay out of trouble. By placing the issues of shame and the lack of control related to justice system involvement in tandem with negative experiences with others, Sky displays how multifaceted parenting problems can be for justice-involved mothers.

Child Centered for Personal Reasons

In the previous section, excerpts reveal how women's child-centered strategies benefited the mothers' personally, particularly by motivating them to stay clean and out of trouble for the sake of their children's well-being. But child centered strategies also helped some mothers

preserve or mend their identities as parents. For example, Sky avoided involvement in the law that would result in parental shame as she reflected on the negative feelings she experienced when her young child pleaded with her not to go back to jail, “I don’t want my three year old running around saying, ‘My mom’s in jail.’ I wasn’t proud of that. It doesn’t make me feel good for my kids to look at me and say, “Mommy I don’t want you to go back to jail.” This example shows how mothers’ adherence to child-centered goals relate to potential improvements in their lifestyles due to their attempts to reduce personal feelings of stigma and shame related to parenting problems. Eighty-six percent ($n = 134$) of the mothers in the sample discussed how their child-centered goals or behaviors related to their pursuit or achievement of personal needs. Specifically, mothers described how child-centered strategies were motivated by or resulted in mothers’ ability to meet their personal goals or needs. Personal improvement, particularly regarding the avoidance of substance use and illegal behavior, wasn’t emphasized in research on intensive parenting for general samples of mothers. This may be because justice-involved mothers seek personal improvement due to a more direct disjuncture between these behaviors and intensive parenting ideals. This disconnect and some of women’s attempts to improve for children are evident in mothers’ accounts of the parenting problems they faced due to conflicts with intensive parenting ideologies including the gendered expectations of mothers.

In addition to improving mothers’ behavior and identity, involvement with children proved to fill an important gap in social support networks for some mothers. When asked about messages, several mothers discussed how their children provided them with compliments, emotional support and personal assistance that helped the mother improve their personal lives. For example, Janet described how her life was improved by spending time with children, “I play video games with them and stuff and it makes me feel good because they’re laughing like,

‘Yeah, mommy’s in here playing video games with us.’ That’s the most important thing.” As the influences on parenting beliefs indicate in the next section, children can influence women’s beliefs about parenting and they can fill in as important sources of social support particularly in forms of emotional and esteem support. Like other adults, older children can also help fill gaps in women’s information and resources as they navigate the justice system and attempt to raise minor children. Research on intensive parenting has largely excluded discussions on large families and on the intricacies to consider when children have substantial age differences. Therefore, adjusting to a wide range of needs based on children’s ages and considering how mothers glean assistance from older children should be considered in research on intensive parenting for justice-involved mothers. Tova described how her adult daughter bolstered her motivation and confidence as a mother while Tova was incarcerated:

“Mom, you know, just let me handle this, I don’t want you to go back to prison. I need you home ... because we wasn’t able to function with you gone.” That just really touched me. Let me get it together – my kids really need me. Then she got my grandbaby, then I think about that when I’m trying to stray off a little bit ...

Fulfillment

Like general samples of mothers from previous research on intensive parenting, nearly 50% ($n = 77$) of justice-involved mothers emphasized how parenting is fulfilling and a key source of enjoyment in their lives. Child-centered themes sometimes overlapped with fulfillment. For example, Daphne said, “ ... my son is my life, if I don’t have him then I don’t have anything.” This quote indicates that her focus is on her child because she needs her child to improve her life, which taps into child-centered for personal reasons and the theme of fulfillment. However, the key distinction is that fulfillment always included women’s reports that

parenting was personally satisfying, and sometimes represented the most satisfying part of their lives. Another vital distinction from child-centered is that excerpts coded as fulfillment did not necessarily serve as a source that motivated women to focus on children's needs. For example, when asked what she's done to make her life better since starting supervision, Sophie mentioned her personal enjoyment when talking to her daughter who lived out of state, "I want to talk to her. I'll talk to her 'til the battery dies." Abby said, "I get to see my kids again, and that's great."

All-Consuming

Another consistent theme for mothers from general populations and this sample of justice-involved mothers was the belief that parenting is or should be all-consuming when performed appropriately. Again, this theme has some overlap with the other themes, particularly child-centered, because of the mother's ideas that proper parenting requires extensive time and resources, which often involved personal sacrifices. All-consuming parenting was sometimes unique for justice-involved mothers. As depicted in women's discussion of parenting problems, there are numerous struggles women face as they attempt to balance that role and their obligations to meet supervision requirements. Some women described sacrificial themes ($n = 138, 88.5\%$) such as feeding their children before themselves and diverting attention from personal pursuits in order to be there for children. Another common point from the justice-involved mothers' accounts was the need to focus on parenting and supporting children financially before completing payments and attending appointments required by supervision. Relatedly, some mothers in the sample expressed essentialist beliefs about parenting that were consistent with views about the importance of mothers in child-rearing.

Essentialism

Although hinting at the importance of being a mother, most of them discussed this subject lightly and the importance of the role of mothers was not specifically probed during the interviews. Essentialism was detected for only 16% of the mothers in the qualitative data. This could be because conventional expressions of essentialism don't account for those of justice-involved mothers. It's also plausible that discussions about motherhood are more sensitive for mothers who had issues with child custody and contact. For some justice-involved mothers who did describe essentialist beliefs about parenting, unique themes emerged compared to the more conventional notions described in research on general populations. The differences were typically based on women's limited social support as well as their inclinations to protect children based on their negative experiences of being separated from children due to their criminal justice system involvement or having an absent mother during vital developmental stages. For example, Stacy said that her parenting strategies were based on discussions she had with her daughter about the importance of the presence of a mother in children's lives:

But then she reminded me, she was like, you know, "Because it was really was so hard, not having my mom around." Like she lived with her dad and step-mom and at first I thought like she was doing ... like academically she was doing well, but you know, she was really like, you know, "I didn't have my mom." And her boyfriend now is going through the same thing she went through. His mom just went to prison, he's about to graduate too. And you know, and I guess she just reminded me, like, you know, like, you can always bounce back. Like no matter what people say and they're judging you, like you can always bounce back.

In another example, Sky described how she was motivated to stay away from trouble because she did not want to go back to jail and be away from her children. She also described how this was especially motivating because mothers have a special role in caring for children:

I was talking to my fiancé and I said it is a lot harder for me to go to jail than for you. He said, why? And I said because I'm a woman, I am the mother and I have the bond, I have this feeling inside of me where I need my children, I have to be around them, I have to

take care of them. But as you, okay you might love the kids, you know, you might feel like you abandoned them but it's not gonna kill you to sit in that jail cell, you're not gonna sit up and think about these kids every day. Me, my instinct is to wake up ... where's my children, what are they doing? Have they ate, have they been fed, have they ... do they have clean clothes, are their faces clean? That's the first thoughts in my head, so when you put me into jail, what's the first thought in my head when I wake up? My kids, where are they, what are they doing, who are they with, are they being taken care of, what's going on with them? So it's a lot harder for us to sit in jail than them.

Sky depicted how the role of mother as unique, even from the children's father, as mothers have stronger connections to children, as well as increased responsibilities and levels of concern and pain when separated from children.

Stimulation

A less common but related theme involved women's belief in the importance of stimulation. This theme often overlapped with other themes as stimulation involved the mothers attempts to cater parenting to developmental phases and to consuming expert advice to properly rear their children. Sometimes this involved attending parenting programs or classes, where mothers received information and learned new practices to improve their parenting skills. Again, Egypt noted how parenting classes helped her learn ways to parent a teenager. Gia also mentioned how classes improved her parenting as she learned better ways to understand and interact with her daughter by, "... understanding [Daughter's] personality to begin with and how polar opposite ... our personalities are. And how to interact with each other and move forward, it's been really good." In other cases, stimulation involved mothers helping children with homework or being involved in their children's schooling and extra-curricular activities. Kim recounted how her agent reinforced her belief in the importance of stimulating her children by helping with their homework, "[Agent] came [to Kim's home] and I was helping [my children] with their homework and [Agent] was like, 'Wow, you're being a real mother. A parent.' ... She was like, 'You're doing an excellent job.' It made me feel good." In another example Sadie

described how she and her daughter started tutoring kids after church on Sundays when asked what she does to make her personal life better, “Yeah, in the church. So they didn’t have any tutoring going on and she’s real good with math, so I was like, ‘Why don’t we do tutoring, you know, because you real good in school.’ So yeah, we started doing tutoring.” Such examples show the ways in which justice-involved mothers embrace stimulation strategies to educate and help their children develop life skills similar to those noted for general populations (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Granja et al., 2015; Opsal, 2009).

Like the other intensive parenting themes, that data exhibited unique stimulating parenting practices for justice-involved mothers based on their experiences and struggles. Common issues that characterized their unique stimulation strategies related to the mother’s legal system involvement, as well as inadequate resources and dangers present in their communities and in their children’s schools. Again, Kate recounted the lessons she taught her daughter to stay safe in their neighborhood, “Say hi to them. Don’t be acting like you’re stuck up, or prejudice or something, because then they’re not going to like you.” Raven also described her need to stimulate children and she focused on keeping her sons busy to stay out of the crime in their community, “I really try to keep them in a church program or something, just anything to do, just don’t be in the streets.” In addition to helping children avoid victimization and negative influences, women also provided stimulation by teaching their children to avoid the prior mistakes they made and by modeling efforts and successful strategies toward positive changes. For example, feelings of guilt for prior relationship issues and her justice system involvement motivated Raven to show her children something different:

I had just got out of trouble, but they seen me go to school every day, do my homework and bring them my grades. I made sure I posted my grades on the refrigerator, every time we got them. I feel like I let my kids down in the beginning because of the baby daddy that I had ... of the stuff that I was going through or the stuff that I was doing. But, in the

end I showed them that it's a different way, you don't always have to depend on somebody else; you can get out here and do it yourself and still be successful.

Lacy also attempted to use her mistakes to teach her children:

I ... I think, I ... I try to make an example of myself to like my kids as to this is what can happen if you make stupid choices and mistakes. I do tend to do that quite often to where my 14 year olds like, "Mom you made a mistake. You tell me this every time you see me ... I get it." He wants to be a cop, so go figure [*laughs*].

These examples show how forms of stimulation related to teaching children to deal with negative circumstances and avoid mistakes they personally made provide insight into methods of stimulation used by justice-involved mothers. These methods of stimulation were not highlighted in research on intensive parenting in general populations and therefore could be helpful to consider in revisions to the IPAQ for justice-involved mothers.

Traits of Good Parents and Bad Parents

Some women also contrasted or depicted the traits of good parents and bad parents in their discussions about parenting. For some mothers, this was based on their own positive or negative upbringings. For example, Julia expressed her concerns about having her parents adopt her daughter because of her negative experiences with her mother:

While I was incarcerated, my parents gained guardianship of my daughter and they want to adopt her now. I kind of feel like I'm bullied into this whole adoption thing ... The only thing that I'm kind of wary of is my mom is just so, like I was telling you, she's a very negative person. She's really emotionally abusive and she doesn't like to admit when she's wrong, so getting an "I'm sorry" out of her will never ever happen and it just tares you down and I'm so afraid that the way – I love my mother, but I have mixed feelings about her – and I'm just so afraid of that happening to my child.

Julia made it evident she was concerned about her children growing up in the same environment she did. Mothers also discussed how they made changes or were motivated to make changes to be better parents for their children's sake. Some compared themselves in the past to their present

selves and some compared themselves to mothers they viewed as bad parents [$n = 8$, 5.12%].

Thelma described an example of this:

“Like, you’ve proved me wrong. I really thought that you weren’t gunna be a good mom.” So I guess you could say that and it just, when I had the baby I just wanted to prove to everybody that, you know, I can do this, I can be the greatest mom ever. And the way that my boyfriend’s sister is, she’s the worst mom I’ve ever seen and we live with his parents and she still lives there. And I just wanted to show everybody ... especially that I could be better than her. Cause it like, it breaks my heart, she’s got three kids and we were pregnant at the same time, pretty much.

Whatever the comparisons, women did sway toward placing a separation between them and others less equipped to parent. As reviewed, this could be the motivation needed to break away from law breaking, but we can also see how deep disappointment can result for those who fail to achieve their goals as parents and as women trying to manage their involvement in the justice system.

Alternative Parenting Ideologies

Nearly 38% ($n = 58$) of the mothers described alternative parenting ideologies signified by women’s discussion of beliefs, goals, or behaviors (i.e. alternative childcare, personal goals, mistakes/frustration, child protection, physical punishment) thereby contrasting intensive parenting ideologies or ideals (**RQ3**). Sometimes alternative parenting ideologies opposed intensive parenting ideologies. In other cases, alternative parenting ideologies were necessary to counterbalance women’s struggles as parents or were used to help women accomplish intensive parenting goals. In other words, alternative parenting ideologies sometimes countered or coincided with intensive parenting ideologies. The present qualitative data and previous studies have shown how parenting can be adapted through many methods when constricted by justice-system involvement – yet most do attempt to meet intensive parenting values (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Granja et al., 2015; Opsal, 2009). It’s important to understand the

unique strategies justice-involved women take to achieve intensive parenting. But given the many barriers they face, it's also imperative to consider how mothers divert their attention to themselves, especially as they attempt to complete supervision requirements and get through important personal steps in recovery. Table 3 displays descriptions of the most common alternative parenting themes as well as the number and percent of mothers who discussed each theme. Examples of the themes are discussed to exhibit perspectives and behaviors that counter intensive parenting and that further demonstrate the conflicts justice-involved mothers face in a society dominated by intensive parenting rhetoric. The examples also show how others, including criminal justice practitioners, helped women modify their parenting goals to be more realistic.

TABLE 3. Descriptions and Number of Mothers who Discussed Alternative Parenting Ideologies ($n = 156$)

Parenting Ideology	Description	Example	n & % Women
Alternative Parenting	Beliefs, goals, or behaviors that counter intensive parenting.		58 (37.18)
Acceptance of Distance from Children or Alternative Child Care	Separation from children and/or alternative care is acceptable.		27 (17.31)
Importance of Personal Goals	Personal goals and opportunities are as central or more important than parenting.		24 (15.38)
Acceptance of Frustration or Mistakes Related to Parenting	Mistakes and/or feelings of frustration related to parenting are acceptable.		27 (17.31)

Acceptance of Distance from Children or Alternative Child Care

One of the most common alternative parenting ideologies involved women's acceptance of alternative childcare. Sometimes this acceptance was due to the mothers' need to work and in other cases it was necessary to counter women's parenting stress or their concern regarding their inability to raise children or the negative influence and/or danger they could pose to their children. This theme most clearly counters the intensive parenting theme of essentialism and sometimes conflicted with other intensive parenting themes such as child-centered and fulfillment. In other words, women, and mothers specifically could sometimes rely on others and even considered others as a better caregiver for their children (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Garcia, 2016; Garcia-Hallett, 2017; Michalsen, 2010). Although most of the women in this sample did seek custody or increased contact with their children, some did see the importance of separation from children for personal reasons and sometimes to be an even better mother in the future. Julia recognized the benefit of limiting the custody of her children to maximize her enjoyment in childrearing and her ability to be positive during the spent time with her children:

I mean, don't get me wrong. I'd love to have them both 100% of the time because they're mine and I love them ... but it's kind of nice [having children live with her parents during the work week] ... being able to wind down and always be a happy person for them to be around.

This example represents an alternative parenting strategy that allows for the achievement of intensive parenting goals. Specifically, parental fulfillment was achieved by having personal time which Julia also described as necessary for child centered goals focused on the positive experiences of her children and on being a good parent.

Importance of Personal Goals

The data also showed how women's acceptance of separation or space from children often overlapped with their focus on personal goals. Julia makes that clear as she discussed how improving as a parent was fulfilling. Others draw a closer connection between their children and their pursuit of personal goals such as recovery, wellness, and livelihood. As we will see again and again, messages about parenting often come from other sources. For example, Tyra's supervision agent helped her recognize the need to solve her personal problems and her need to live separately from children so she could make personal changes before resuming her role as the primary caregiver of her children:

I said, I told [PO] I want to go back to California for my kids and I want to go back to school. I let him know that and then he's always, you know, I can do it. You know, he told me I can't get myself together—I can't help my kids out unless I got myself together first. So I do communicate with him on the level of how you would talk to somebody that's older, more mature. He said that to me and some people might say, "Okay, yeah, that's common sense," you know but really you won't believe how many people they want to do... the main thing is they want to do for their kids. "I need to do this for my children, I need to be there for them, I need to..." but if mentally you don't have it all together you can't be there for 'em. And no one has ever told her anything like that before. . Just for him to tell me at the time, the things that was going on, and for him to be like, "[Tyra], you're human. You can't be happy every day." He said, "It happens, you know if you do call me, let me know." He said, "Because you can't help them if you don't help yourself. ... You can't be their support because you don't have it together."

Leslie's supervision agent helped her determine consistent forms of discipline that conflicted with essentialism and conventional child-centered themes as her agent advised separation from her children. This eventually influenced Leslie to perform "tough love" so she didn't have to manage her older daughter's difficult behavior:

I tried to kick her out of the house; I couldn't do it. Like, "If you're not going to go to school, you're not gunna have a job; I'm not gunna take care of you. You're 17 years old," – she wants a cell phone. Her cell phone got cell phone got turned off because she wasn't babysitting to pay it and I'm like, "I'm not paying it. You know, that's a luxury and if you want it; you need to find a way to pay it." [Laughs] You know so, yeah [PO] and I talk about that a little bit.

At a later interview described how she ended up kicking her daughter out since the last interview and she also disclosed that she distanced herself from her other children who she feared compromised her well-being. Kylie's Supervision agent also encouraged her client to enact "tough love" by staying away from her children so she could meet her own needs of staying away from the abuse she experienced from her children:

Put the kids out of here, get 'em away from me. I have to learn to live alone, you know. It's tough love, you know. That's the way I have ... it's hard because, like I told my therapist, it's so very hard because that's all I have is my kids. And for them to leave me, you know, I already got one in jail and then last week the other one got out of jail and my son beat the mess out of her because she came in here and disrespected me. Girl, she made me sleep in my basement, just so her boyfriend's mom could sleep on the couch and she could sleep in my bed. I had to sleep in the basement. So my son came and beat the mess out of her, "You put my mom in the basement?" But he can disrespect me, you understand where I'm coming from? So I'm like ... very, very in a mental state of depression but I'm trying to stay strong, you know, because I know how far I've come. You know, if I've come this far, I can continue to go further.

Obviously, parenting isn't always easy, but what some participants revealed was how parenting can be volatile. Sometimes mothers felt too stressed and needed time for themselves, and in some cases children served as a direct threat to the participants' mental or physical well-being. The complications that exist in the lives of justice-involved mothers make these instances more common, especially when they have many children varying in age.

Acceptance of Frustration or Mistakes Related to Parenting

Conflicting feelings about parenting were sometimes expressed by women who attempted to come to terms with their mistakes as parents or with accepting that parenting often frustrated them and therefore was not as fulfilling. Lana described how her supervision agent helped her realize that her past mistakes did not define her as a parent and that she was not responsible for her daughter's misbehaviors:

It's helped me on a number of different occasions to not only just not drinking prior to but more so I notice it with [Daughter]. That there's a lot of times that she's very in a high key situation and realize that I don't have buy into any of this sort of stuff. I'm not responsible for what she's doing right now. Because I did, I felt it, all the stuff that I wasn't as a mom and the shortcomings and the marriage, this has created this and this is my fault and I realize that she still has a really good head on her shoulders and she still does make decisions that are all hers that she has to be accountable for-- not me. *(Laughs)* You know, and it's changed a lot of it has changed our relationship, that she's picking up on that. That even with her own friends, that she doesn't have to be a part of their drama, that she's learning I need just enough for my own.

In a different way, Maggie's supervision agent helped her rectify her feelings about her mistakes as a mother after her relapse:

She went to court with us back in December to tell them that I was very honest and forward about my relapse and that she was sending me back to inpatient and ... so, I mean, it ... I mean, she hasn't made it worse or anything, I mean ... she's, I mean, she helps as far as, you know, making me feel better and making me feel, you know, like I'm not some worthless piece of crap mom.

Supervision agents and support groups also helped women feel more comfortable with their frustrations with the parenting role and sometimes with the opposition between their frustrations and their idealistic view on the fulfilling role of motherhood. Personal experiences rearing multiple children throughout their lives was also a frustration for some mothers that led them to disconnect from ideas about the fulfilling role of parenting. For instance, Bray described how she wasn't sure if having another child was right for her due to the timing in her life and her shifting responsibilities for her older children:

I got pregnant. I don't know if that is good thing or a bad thing. I was going through menopause and they gave me some stupid shot, and now I'm pregnant. I'm 40 years old, I don't need another kid. Planning baby showers and graduations don't work.

The women in this sample show how frustrating it can be to parent children at completely different life stages by taking up parental responsibilities such as being present and prepared for many children throughout their lives. As Bray explained, it can be difficult getting pregnant and planning for a newborn after you've already spent most of your life trying to take care of your

kids. Imagine how she feels thinking about buying expensive diapers while also paying for prom attire and senior portraits for her older children. It is clear that having multiple children at different developmental stages can be frustrating and some women like Bray express their regret for getting pregnant and their lack of interest in having another child. This is not a theme discussed in research on conventional intensive parenting values and therefore may be particularly important to include in future research on the attitudes and beliefs for justice-involved mothers and those who have similar compounding vulnerabilities.

Influences on Parenting Ideologies

The qualitative data and the examples reviewed show how others can influence women's intensive parenting and alternative parenting beliefs and strategies (see Table 4 below). The data enabled the exploration of how women's experiences and interactions with others influenced the development or reinforcement of their parenting ideologies (**RQ 3**). This extension allowed for an initial understanding of how justice-involved women develop potentially harmful, helpful, or passive ideas about parenting, and to assess whether experiences within the justice system frame their ideas about parenting. As the previous examples of problems and ideologies portrayed, parenting ideologies were commonly the result of the mother's experiences, and particularly with their experiences in the justice system. Sometimes these experiences were helpful by highlighting a prosocial parenting perspective. In other cases these experiences conflicted with or prompted mothers to make sacrifices to meet their goals as parents which could help to explain their well-being-related risks and their recidivism.

It is obvious from Table 4 that family and others (i.e., children, friends, media) contribute to women's beliefs about parenting. In particular, the women discuss how their children influenced their beliefs. The anguish children experience during separation and the lack of

support and the harms they faced when they were separated from mothers resulted in unique features of intensive parenting and alternative parenting that isn't highlighted in existing research on intensive parenting. These findings exhibit how the hardships justice-involved mothers face are often linked to institutional deficiencies above and beyond the mothers' attitudes and behaviors. It is also noteworthy that mothers were asked to recall messages from others, and the research team did seek to understand messages from individuals or service providers within the justice system at the third of the three qualitative interviews considered in this study.

TABLE 4. Influences on Parenting Ideologies for Justice-Involved Mothers Who Discussed Parenting Ideologies ($n = 146$)

	Number of Participants	Percent of Participants
Personal Experience	142	97.26
Personal Criminal Justice Experience	20	81.19
Necessity	60	41.20
Practitioners or Programs	86	58.90
Supervision Agent	68	46.58
Program Referred to by Criminal Justice System or Child Protective Services	33	22.60
Program Not Referred to by Criminal Justice System of Child Protective Services	9	6.16
Judge	5	3.42
Counselor	5	3.42
Family	68	46.58
Child	32	21.92
Parent or Grandparent	31	21.23
Child's Father	8	5.48
Significant Other	5	3.42
Sibling	5	3.42
Other Family Member	4	2.74
Other	30	20.55
Religion	13	8.90
Friends	9	6.16
Everyone	6	4.11
Media	4	2.74
Other Associates	2	1.40

To explore the potential sources and influences on mothers' different parenting ideologies, correlations were run to see the associations among the presence of each parenting ideology type and the influences on their beliefs coded from the qualitative data. Most of the intensive parenting ideologies exhibited positive significant relationships with the most prevalent influences included in the correlations (i.e., personal experiences, personal criminal justice

experiences, necessity, practitioners and programs, supervision agents, family). There are a few other notable relationships exhibited below on Table 5. One interesting finding is that the coded qualitative indicator of essentialism was significantly associated with women who reported discussions about parenting with family members. Therefore, women's beliefs and actions guided by the notion that mothers are uniquely connected and responsible for childrearing are significantly related to interactions and discussions with family members such as children, parents, grandparents, and significant others. Another notable observation derived from the correlations with the coding on parenting ideologies is that fulfillment in the parenting role was only associated with participants' accounts of their own experiences not including their personal experiences in the criminal justice system. The presence of at least one of the alternative parenting ideologies was positively related to each of the influences but the presence of the individual types of alternative parenting ideologies was not related to the presence of any individual intensive parenting ideology (i.e. acceptance of distance or alternative care, importance of personal goals, acceptance of parenting frustration and mistakes). These correlations provide a roadmap for future research examining how parenting ideologies and influences on ideologies relate to parenting problems and outcomes for mothers. Such research could lead to an improved understanding of potential circumstances and people in justice-involved mothers' lives with education on how to assess women's expectations as parents and communicate with mothers facing different parenting problems.

TABLE 5. Correlations among Influences on Parenting Ideology and the Presence of Each Type of Parenting Ideology Coded During the First Three Interviews

	Personal Experience	Personal CJ Experience	Necessity	Practitioners or Programs	Supervision Agent	Family
<u>Intensive Parenting Ideologies</u>	.922 **	.501 **	.238 **	.339 **	.269 **	.245 **
Child-Centered	.730 **	.432 **	.299 **	.351 **	.300 **	.230 **
Child-Centered for Personal Reasons	.658 **	.485 **	.114	.332 **	.233 **	.233 **
All Consuming	.322 **	.283 **	.287 **	.230 **	.264 **	.020
Fulfillment	.306 **	.135	.139	.131	.074	.113
Good Parent/Bad Parent	.232 **	.294 **	.248 **	.226 **	.237 **	.255 **
Stimulation	.209 **	.184 *	.215 **	.255 **	.244 **	.196 *
Essentialism	.134	.118	.009	.038	- .041	.254 **
<u>Alternative Parenting Ideologies</u>	.242 **	.251 **	.270 **	.260 **	.361 **	.193 *

* p < .05; **p < .01

Below Table 6 reveals several interesting correlations between the influences on parenting ideologies identified in the first three interviews and the outcomes measures including women's well-being at the follow-up interview ($n = 98$) and recidivism data collected within the 84-month period after the start of the study ($n = 156$). Personal experiences and personal experiences with the criminal justice system that shaped women's parenting beliefs and actions significantly related to higher levels of depression and anxiety at the follow-up. Beliefs and actions linked to practitioners or programs, supervision agents and family members were also associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety at the follow-up. Supervision agent's influence on women's parenting beliefs and actions also were significantly related to their arrests and convictions within 84 months of the start of the study. A more surprising finding is that women who were influenced by their involvement in the justice system had higher levels of life satisfaction at the follow-up. Reflections on these findings may indicate that mothers who are at a higher risk for depression and anxiety are more likely to require or be confronted by situations and interactions with others regarding their parenting beliefs and actions. Additionally, mothers at risk for reoffending may require, seek out assistance, or be confronted by their supervision agents regarding their parenting beliefs and actions. Again, these exploratory findings could guide future research on how influences relate to ideologies, risks, and outcomes to determine the best ways to communicate with justice-involved mothers depending on their circumstances.

TABLE 6. Correlations among Influences on Parenting Ideology and Outcome Variables

	Resource Problem		Criminal Justice Problem	Substance, Mental Health, or Physical Health		Negative Relationships	Child Issue	Custody Problem		Others Negative Relationship with Child	Neighborhood Danger		Parenting Ideology Conflict
Self-Efficacy	.043	-	.173	.006	-	.013	.017	.034		.170	-	.011	- .019
Life Satisfaction	.014		.171	.057		.093	.060	.052	-	.017	-	.022	.176
Depression and Anxiety	.139		.193	.293 **		.136	.029	.214 *		.085	-	.030	.219 *
Anger and Hostility	- .121		.186	.029	-	.082	.139	.064	-	.133		.116	.148
Parenting Stress	- .021		.279 **	.094		.008	.005	.088		.141		.080	.201
Arrests within 84 Months	.118		.181 *	.115	-	.061	.018	.043	-	.049	-	.174 *	.118
Convictions within 84 Months	.114		.191 *	.004	-	.036	.014	.004	-	.095		.155	.114

* p < .05; **p < .01

CHAPTER 6: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS ON THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN PARENTING PROBLEMS AND WOMEN'S WELL-BEING AND RECIDIVISM

Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to assess whether parenting problems were associated with reduced well-being (**H1**) and recidivism (**H2**). The parenting problems identified in the qualitative data were dichotomized to enable the examination of the presence of each type of parenting problem. Measures of well-being from the follow-up interview approximately three years after the first interview ($n = 98$), and the arrests and convictions noted in the 84 months after the study began ($n = 156$) were measured as outcomes. These analyses are exploratory because of the small sample size.

Although the sample includes only 98 participants for the analyses including well-being and 156 for the analyses including arrests and convictions, these subsamples are larger than those in existing qualitative research on parenting experiences of mothers on supervision. The exploratory analyses derived from this research will greatly inform this avenue of research including the development of quantitative measures of parenting problems based on the words of the women in this study. The development of a reliable scale could be incorporated into future research with larger samples of parents on supervision and eventually could be incorporated into training and risk assessments used by practitioners.

Descriptive Statistics for Variables

Below, Table 7 displays the distribution statistics for each of the independent and dependent measures, and these results allowed me to ascertain the appropriate regression methods for the well-being and recidivism variables. Descriptive statistics for each outcome variable display the number of participants, mean, standard deviation, and range for each of the outcome variables. In addition to examining the distribution based on the means, standard

deviations, ranges, and histograms were conducted to identify the distribution of the measures of the well-being and the recidivism outcomes (i.e., Arrests within 84 months, Convictions within 84 months). The well-being measures appeared to have relatively normal distributions with relatively low standard deviations and normal histogram charts. However, the recidivism measures have higher standard deviations and displayed a high distribution toward zeros. These issues indicate that the recidivism measures require the use of negative binomial regression.

TABLE 7. Descriptive Statistics for Measures of Parenting Problems, Psychological Well-being, and Recidivism

	N	Mean	SD	Range
Self-Efficacy	98	1.594	0.352	0.412-2.000
Life Satisfaction	98	20.460	7.745	5.000-35.000
Depression and Anxiety	98	2.000	2.090	0.000-6.000
Anger and Hostility	98	0.990	1.102	0.000-3.000
Parenting Stress	98	-0.392	5.108	-14.450--11.550
Arrests within 84 Months	156	2.290	3.558	0.000-23.000
Convictions within 84 Months	156	2.900	4.285	0.000-21.000
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$				

Correlations between Parenting Problems and Psychological Well-being and Recidivism

Table 8 exhibits the results of the correlation analysis among the parenting problem variables and outcome measures. Correlation analysis assessing the nine dichotomized parenting problems (i.e. parenting ideology conflict, criminal justice problem, substance use/mental or physical health, child custody, neighborhood danger) showed some significant relationships with the psychological well-being and/or the recidivism measures (i.e., all measures of psychological well-being, and recidivism based on arrests and convictions during the 84-month period after the study began).

Most of the significant relationships are intuitive in that the presence of a parenting problem type expressed by women in the qualitative interviews was associated with diminished well-being and higher levels of recidivism. The presence of a conflict with the mother's parenting ideologies was positively associated with women's subsequent depression and anxiety. Women who mentioned having a parenting problem stemming from their involvement in the justice system were significantly more likely to have higher levels of parenting stress and more arrests and convictions. Additionally, mothers who described a parenting problem related to substance use, mental health, or a physical health issue exhibited higher levels of depression and anxiety. Women who mentioned a child custody problem also had higher levels of depression and anxiety.

There was one relationship that was not expected. Specifically, the presence of a parenting problem related to neighborhood danger was negatively related to arrests. There could be multiple reasons for this including limited resources available to address crime and the presence of more serious crimes being targeted for arrests in dangerous neighborhoods.

TABLE 8. Correlations Between Parenting Problems and Measures of Well-being and Recidivism ($n = 156$)

	Resource Problem		Criminal Justice Problem	Substance, Mental Health, or Physical Health		Negative Relationships	Child Issue	Custody Problem		Others Negative Relationship with Child	Neighborhood Danger		Parenting Ideology Conflict
Self-Efficacy	.043	-	.173	.006	-	.013	.017	.034	.170	-	.011	-	.019
Life Satisfaction	.014		.171	.057		.093	.060	.052	-.017	-	.022		.176
Depression and Anxiety	.139		.193	.293 **		.136	.029	.214 *	.085	-	.030		.219 *
Anger and Hostility	-.121		.186	.029	-	.082	.139	.064	-.133		.116		.148
Parenting Stress	-.021		.279 **	.094		.008	.005	.088	.141		.080		.201
Arrests within 84 Months	.118		.181 *	.115	-	.061	.018	.043	-.049	-	.174 *		.118
Convictions within 84 Months	.114		.191 *	.004	-	.036	.014	.004	-.095		.155		.114

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Regressions of Parenting Problems on Psychological Well-being and Recidivism

Regression analysis was conducted to further examine the relationships between the parenting problems, well-being measures at the follow-up, and the mothers' recidivism during the 84 months after supervision began. Only the five significant parenting problems from the correlations were focused on during these analyses. These five items all were associated with diminished well-being and/or heightened recidivism in the correlations. Again, the types of regression used are informed by the histogram charts and the distribution statistics of the outcome variables which are listed on Table 7. Therefore, measures of well-being were examined using logistic regression based and measures of recidivism were examined using negative binomial regression as the distribution of arrests and convictions were distributed toward zero.

Regression Results for Parenting Problems on Psychological Well-Being

Multivariate analysis is challenging because of the small number of cases and the large number of different parenting problems identified in the qualitative analysis and the number of well-being measures captured in the follow-up survey. Binary logistic results are presented to test the bivariate relationship as additional statistical measures are included in the results. Tables 9-12 below display the binary logistic regression analyses with well-being at the follow-up interview as the dependent variables and the significant parenting problem types identified in the correlation matrix as the independent variables. The parenting problem types that exhibited significant relationships with the subsequent measures of well-being include women's mention of a parenting problem related to criminal justice system involvement, substance use/mental health, child custody, and a parenting ideology conflict. The statistics included in the tables indicate the models with significant F , R^2 , and adjusted R^2 results. The coefficients, standard

errors and exponentiated *bs* are also included to indicate the direction and significance of the relationship between the intercept and the presence of each parenting problem and the outcome variables identified in the correlations. The measure of well-being for depression/anxiety at the follow-up was positively predicted in the regressions for women's mention of a parenting problem related to a parenting ideology conflict, having a parenting problem related to substance use or mental health problems, and having a problem related to child custody. The well-being variable indicating parenting stress at the final interview was positively related to women's mention of a parenting problem related to criminal justice system involvement during the previous interviews. Overall, these results confirm that having a conflict with ideal parenting, having parenting problems related to substance use and health, and having a problem with child custody may impact women's psychological well-being. Therefore, these parenting problems should be of particular interest for practitioners and incorporated into risk assessment tools to allow more specific detection of such issues.

TABLE 9. Regression of the Presence of a Criminal Justice Involvement Parenting Problem on Depression and Anxiety ($n = 98$)

	Coef.	SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	- 2.289 *	.819	
Criminal Justice Parenting Problem	2.948 **	1.114	.277
<i>F</i>	6.999 **		
<i>R</i> ²	0.077		
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.066		

*.p<.10; **.p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 10. Regression of the Presence of a Child Custody Parenting Problem on Depression and Anxiety ($n = 98$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.585	***	.281	
Child Custody Problem	0.948	**	.415	.227
<i>F</i>	5.227	**		
<i>R</i> ²	0.052			
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.042			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 11. Regression of the Presence of a Substance Use, Mental Health, or Physical Health Parenting Problem on Depression and Anxiety ($n = 98$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.349	***	.307	
Substance Use, Mental Health, or Physical Health Parenting Problem	1.197	***	.410	.285
<i>F</i>	8.519	***		
<i>R</i> ²	0.082			
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.072			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 12. Regression of the Presence of a Parenting Ideology Conflict Parenting Problem on Depression and Anxiety ($n = 98$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	1.174	***	.427	
Parenting Ideology Conflict	1.106	**	.488	.225
<i>F</i>	5.137	**		
<i>R</i> ²	0.225			
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	0.041			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

Regression Results for Parenting Problems on Recidivism

Tables 13 – 17 exhibit negative binomial regressions for an indication of the parenting problems with the measures of recidivism based on the number of arrests and convictions during the 84-month period after the start of the study. Since both arrests and convictions are negatively distributed and this could not be accounted for in the initial correlations, so each of the parenting problems was assessed in the negative binomial regression analyses predicting recidivism. The measures that exhibited significant relationships with the measures of recidivism are displayed in the tables and include the presence of a parenting problem related to criminal justice system involvement, neighborhood danger, and a parenting ideology conflict. The statistics included on the tables indicate the models with significant χ^2 results for the overall model. The coefficients, standard errors, and exponentiated *bs* are also included to indicate the direction and significance of the relationship between the intercept and the presence of each parenting problem and the outcome variables identified in the correlations.

Women's mention of a parenting problem related to criminal justice system involvement and neighborhood danger both exhibited significant positive associations with arrests and convictions. These results are interesting because the relationship between the presence of a parenting problem related to neighborhood danger was negatively associated with arrests in the correlations, but positively related to arrests and convictions in the negative binomial regressions which account for the distribution of these recidivism variables. Their indication of a parenting problem related to a conflict with their parenting ideology during the first three interviews was also positively related to convictions. However, this relationship was only moderately significant at .056 based on the negative binomial regression results. The inconsistencies between the correlational and negative binomial regression results for the presence of a parenting problem

related to neighborhood danger and a parenting ideology conflict reflect the importance of using rigorous analytic techniques that account for the distribution of the outcome variables.

In summary, the presence of these parenting problems (i.e., criminal justice involvement,, substance use or mental health issues, child custody, neighborhood danger, parenting ideology conflicts) should be assessed by researchers and practitioners working with mothers on community supervision.

TABLE 13. Regression of the Presence of a Criminal Justice Involvement Parenting Problem on the Number of Arrests in 84-Month Period ($n = 156$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	73.631	***	.1207	
Criminal Justice Parenting Problem	9.535	***	.2024	.535
χ^2	9.429	***		
<i>Df</i>	1			

*.p<.10; **.p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 14. Regression of the Presence of a Criminal Justice Involvement Parenting Problem on the Number of Convictions in 84-Month Period ($n = 156$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	117.645	***	.1173	
Criminal Justice Parenting Problem	10.392	***	.1949	.534
χ^2	10.207	***		
<i>Df</i>	1			

*.p<.10; **.p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 15. Regression of the Presence of a Neighborhood Danger Parenting Problem on the Number of Arrests in 84-Month Period ($n = 156$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	3.598	*	.4830	
Neighborhood Parenting Problem	13.741	***	.4932	6.223
χ^2	15.656	***		
<i>Df</i>	1			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 16. Regression of the Presence of a Neighborhood Danger Parenting Problem on the Number of Convictions in 84-Month Period ($n = 156$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	0.143		.3789	
Neighborhood Parenting Problem	10.692	***	.3911	3.592
χ^2	10.404	***		
<i>Df</i>	1			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

TABLE 17. Regression of the Presence of a Parenting Ideology Conflict Parenting Problem on the Number of Convictions in 84-Month Period ($n = 156$)

	Coef.		SE	<i>exp(b)</i>
<i>Intercept</i>	119.09	***	.1060	
Parenting Ideology Conflict	3.89	*	.2222	.645
χ^2	9.429	*		
<i>Df</i>	1			

*.p<.10; **p<.05; ***p<.01

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Prior research shows that the connection of motherhood to illegal behavior is complex, with findings being mixed on the impact of justice-involved women's roles as parents on their well-being and recidivism. In particular, research is needed to explain inconsistent findings regarding the impact that parenting has on reoffending. On the one hand, qualitative accounts have portrayed children as central in motivating women to assume law-abiding roles in society (Adams et. al., 2017; Arditti & Few, 2008; Giordano, 2010). However, the same qualitative research and some quantitative analyses have shown that parenting can increase illegal behavior by creating stress (Adams et al., 2017; Arditti & Few, 2008; Giordano, 2010; Van Voorhis, Bauman, & Brushett, 2012, 2013). There also are inconsistent results across studies, with some finding lower levels of reoffending for mothers than for women without children (Benda, 2005; Giordano, Seffrin, Manning, & Longmore, 2011; Kreager, Matsueda, & Erosheva, 2010; Uggen & Kruttschnitt, 1998; Yule, Paré, and Gartner, 2015), and others finding mixed (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Michalsen, 2011) or statistically non-significant results regarding the impact of motherhood on reoffending (Cobbina, 2009; Griffin & Armstrong, 2003; Rettinger & Andrews, 2010; Stalans & Lurigio, 2015).

Desistance scholars emphasize the importance of using not only quantitative, but also qualitative methods to identify the cognitive and contextual features of prosocial roles, such as parenting, that may explain variations in reoffending (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002; Giordano, 2010; Laub & Sampson, 2003). Specifically, qualitative narrative accounts can capture how individuals recognize opportunities, create plans, and enact prosocial roles. For instance, in their theory of cognitive transformation, Giordano and colleagues (2002) analyzed narratives to identify a person's stage in the desistance process. They theorized a process starting with the recognition of prosocial roles and ending with later stages in which prosocial roles serve

as motivational forces that lead to behavioral change, including desistance. They hypothesized that those at the latter stages experience more long-term prosocial change as their deliberate motives and behaviors lead to a new or bolstered prosocial identity that is eventually viewed as inconsistent with criminal behavior (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002). The theory of cognitive transformation inspired additional research focused on the relationship between recidivism, risks for recidivism, and features of parenting (Adams, 2020; Adams et al., 2017; Giordano, 2010; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). Contrary to the theory of cognitive transformation, and despite the prevalence of parenting as a prosocial motivation in justice-involved mothers' narratives, research has not consistently linked these thoughts and efforts to reduce reoffending (Adams et al., 2017; Bachman et al., 2016; Giordano, 2010; Giordano et al., 2002; Michalsen, 2011).

Researchers have started to explore the reasons for the inconsistent relationship between women's roles as parents and their offending behaviors. One important avenue is understanding how the problems justice-involved mothers face can reduce the prosocial capacity of the parenting role, and even how parenting problems can be a catalyst for reoffending (Adams et al., 2017; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Giordano, 2010; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). Despite this development, it remains unclear what specific issues women faced hindered their ability to desist from crime. In addition to understanding specific parenting problems, social psychological research on parenting and well-being led me to explore parenting ideologies as an explanation for inconsistencies in prior research. Specifically, research drawn from this study examined justice-involved mothers' subscription to intensive parenting beliefs, which portray the dominant parenting ideology in the U.S. (Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016; Liss et al., 2013a). Like findings from studies of general populations of mothers, I have found that

women's subscription to essentialism and all-consuming parenting were related to lower levels of well-being (Adams, 2020), which are risk factors for recidivism (Van Voorhis et al., 2012, 2013). In addition to highlighting the importance of exploring how women's beliefs about ideal parenting impact their well-being, it is also important to understand how their parenting problems interfere with their beliefs.

This study helps unpack these issues by exploring the impact of parenting problems and ideologies by studying how particular parenting problems including conflicts with their parenting ideologies associated with justice-involved women's risks and recidivism. There are several ways this research can be useful and the first is that the qualitative accounts of the parenting problems women faced while on community supervision could be used to create a specific risk-needs assessment related to parenting for justice-involved mothers. While addressing RQ1, "What are the most common types of parenting problems discussed by justice-involved mothers?", the justice-involved women's accounts revealed nine types of parenting problems. The most common parenting problem was women experiencing a conflict with positive parenting practices indicative of intensive parenting ideals. These issues typically coincided with the other parenting problems, providing a deeper understanding of the ways multiple parenting issues manifest and can result in women's diminished well-being and in turn their increased likelihood of recidivism.

The eight other parenting problems identified include parenting issues related to resources, criminal justice involvement, substance use/mental health/physical health problems, negative personal relationships, problems related to child custody or contact, problems related to the characteristics of the children, others' negative relationships with children, and problems related to neighborhood danger. The mothers' vivid and emotional accounts provide a blueprint

for creating a scale for the parenting problems faced by mothers struggling to manage their roles as parents and with their justice system involvement. The problems identified are consistent with prior research identifying parenting problems (e.g., parenting ideology conflicts, resource problems, substance use/mental health/physical health problems, negative personal relationships, problems related to child custody or contact, problems related to the characteristics of the children, others' negative relationships with children, and problems related to neighborhood danger).

Consistent with themes from prior research (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Hagan & Dinovitzer, 1999 Michalsen, 2010), this study found that justice-involved mothers face competing obligations that require them to attempt to balance supervision and parenting. On average women in this sample described four of the nine types of parenting problems which is consistent with other qualitative research identifying compounding risks among mothers reentering society from incarceration (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Garcia, 2016; Garcia-Hallett, 2017; Michalsen, 2010; Opsal, 2009, 2011). While encountering an arduous balancing act to achieve the idealistic goals of motherhood with multiple parenting problems, some women in this sample sacrificed their own well-being including their obligations on supervision. If they failed to meet their goals as parents, they sometimes expressed guilt and shame and connected these negative feelings directly to their relapse and recidivism. Julia's account of her parenting problems related to her shared custody and parental insecurity described earlier in the study depicts an example of a direct connection between a conflict with her maternal identity that led her to relapse and to fail a drug test for parole, "I had a dirty drop. I had a really bad week that week and my youngest daughter – I share custody of her with her father and he's got a live-in girlfriend and I found out

that week that she'd been calling her 'Mommy.'" Julia's struggle displays how compounding parenting problems can be destructive in women's lives and these harmful effects are prevalent in the accounts of many of the mothers in this relatively large sample of justice-involved mothers.

Correlation analyses were conducted in order to guide regressions to address the two hypotheses **(H1)** "Parenting problems will be negatively related to quantitative measures of justice-involved mothers' psychological well-being at the follow-up interview." and **(H2)** "Parenting problems will be positively related to justice-involved mothers' recidivism during the 84-month period after the study began." The correlations indicated significant relationships with five of the parenting problems (i.e. parenting ideology conflict, criminal justice problem, substance use/mental or physical health, child custody, neighborhood danger) and the measures of well-being at the follow-up approximately three years after the third interview and recidivism within the 84 months after the study began (i.e., arrests, convictions). These measures were included in binary regression analyses to further explore these relationships based on the distributions of the outcome variables. Binary regression analyses were used to examine these relationships with measures of well-being and negative binomial regressions were utilized in the analyses on the recidivism outcomes based on the distributions. First, the presence of a parenting ideology conflict exhibited a significant positive relationship with women's depression and anxiety and with their subsequent convictions. Mothers who described a parenting problem related to their criminal justice system involvement also exhibited significantly higher levels of parenting stress and had more subsequent arrests and convictions. Women who mentioned a problem with substance use, mental health, or physical health issues scored higher on depression and anxiety at the final interview. Another significant relationship that emerged was the

association between a child custody or contact problem and higher levels of depression and anxiety at the final interview. Finally, a parenting problem related to neighborhood danger was related to more arrests and convictions during the 84 months after the study began. Based on these results parenting problems, especially when compounded and when conflicting with parenting beliefs and intentions, were harmful. Therefore, research and practice with justice-involved mothers should focus on these nine parenting problems, and a particular effort should be made to address the five parenting problems significantly related to women's diminished well-being and increased recidivism in the regressions (i.e., parenting ideology conflict, criminal justice problem, substance use/mental or physical health, child custody, neighborhood danger).

The qualitative analyses also reveal additional indicators of intensive parenting ideologies and alternative parenting ideologies that differ from intensive parenting ideals for parents on probation or parole. As was revealed by Adams (2020) only two of the five dimensions identified for the general population (Liss et al., 2013) were detected for mothers on probation or parole. Again, the suggestions from Adams (2020) and then enhanced by this qualitative content on parenting ideologies provide readers with more information on how parenting is viewed by those on community supervision. These findings were used to address the second research question, "What are the most common types of parenting ideologies discussed by justice-involved mothers?" All five dimensions from the IPAQ were identified in the qualitative content and the excerpts from the sample could help improve the scale for this population as some of their discussions about parenting were unique given the justice-involved mothers' common struggles with other life challenges such as having limited resources, substance use problems, experiencing problems with the legal system. The qualitative accounts also revealed two additional expressions of intensive parenting that could be used to improve the scale and those include

having a child-centered approach for personal benefits or satisfaction. For example, relationships with children were often discussed by women who indicated their lives were better because of their children either because children served as a motivation or a direct experience of satisfaction or support from their children. Another intensive parenting theme that was uncovered was a focus on being a good parent rather than a bad parent. In these instances, women would discuss the differences between their previous parenting and current parenting or even the differences between their parenting and practices by those they considered as “bad parents”. This is consistent with prior research on desistance by authors who identified coping mechanisms with parenting as making comparisons between themselves and others they perceive as worse (Brown & Bloom, 2009; Maruna, 2000). Including questions that reflect these perspectives could improve the IPAQ (Liss et al., 2013) for use with correctional populations.

Another way to improve the IPAQ (Liss et al., 2013) would be to include themes discussed by mothers in the sample that opposed intensive parenting positions. Some examples that could expand on that work based on this study include the focus on alternative parenting ideologies, such as a woman’s prioritization of personal needs like their personal mental health or substance use treatment before their parenting role. Mothers also discussed a need to let others care for children and even separating themselves from their children to ensure their personal safety. These qualitative accounts could be used to improve the existing parenting ideology questionnaire to better reflect the experiences of mothers with personal, communal, and legal struggles. Like having a specific assessment tool for parenting problems based on the voices of justice-involved mothers, an IPAQ adapted based on women’s accounts from this study would be informative for those working with justice-involved mothers as they identify their risks and needs. And this tool could be specifically used to assist practitioners as they understand the

parenting role impacts justice-involved women's lives and how they should discuss and assist justice-involved mothers in parenting.

Relatedly, the women's accounts provide insight into the influences on their parenting ideologies by impacting their parenting beliefs and actions. These reflections addressed the third research question, "What are the most common influences on justice-involved mothers' parenting ideologies?". The most prevalent influences on women's parenting ideologies reflected by sources associated with the mothers' parenting beliefs and behaviors included personal experiences, personal criminal justice experiences, necessities, practitioners and programs, supervision agents, and family members. Based on the women's accounts all these sources impacted their intensive and alternative parenting ideologies. For example, supervision agents influence mothers' parenting ideologies, sometimes through supportive messages meant to motivate women to improve for their children, or through negative messages about their parenting and the impact of their previous and current actions on their children. Personal experiences within and outside of the justice system also frame the ways women consider and behave as mothers. Another notable observation is the impact of the words of children on women's emotions and behaviors.

Children of all ages influenced women. Older children sometimes provided supportive sentiments or actions that influenced the mothers' perspectives, beliefs, and performance as parents. Older children influenced women with their words of support and with their instrumental support for their mothers as they helped them cope with stress and with parenting younger children. The findings reveal multiple instances of children at various ages and developmental stages with behavioral problems that impacted the women's beliefs and actions regarding parenting. Behavioral problems of children are also multifaceted based on many

features such as age, communal, and intergenerational circumstances that impact how mothers view their responsibilities, behaviors, reactions, and reflections of themselves as mothers.

Although younger children were limited in providing instrumental support that impacted their mothers' parenting, the mother's accounts indicate that the words and even the facial expressions of their young children empowered them to improve, but sometimes made them experience shame for failing to properly parent their young and vulnerable children. A powerful example of this is from Sky who described how her child expressed concern and fear that she would be incarcerated again, "It doesn't make me feel good for my kids to look at me and say, 'Mommy I don't want you to go back to jail.' That don't feel good at all; and the only thing you can say to them is, 'I'm not going to, I'm trying not to.'" These personal experiences within and outside the justice system and messages received by others clearly shape how justice-involved women think about and act as mothers.

Paired with the findings from Adams (2020) and Liss and Colleagues (2013) indicating that essentialism and all-consuming parenting ideologies relate to diminished well-being, these findings provide a pathway to identify the ways support, education, and training could be provided to justice-involved women and those who assist and interact with them. The accounts of the mothers in this study suggest the need to consider the problems of the mothers on supervision as they attempt to balance their complicated and compounding problems and supervision requirements while attempting to meet the expectations of intensive parenting.

Again, this research provides an important step in the development of a tool for measuring justice-involved mothers' parenting problems and parenting ideologies. This research also offers enhanced knowledge on the influences on women's parenting beliefs and provides more insight into the unique manifestations of intensive and alternative parenting ideologies for

justice-involved women. This information can be used to improve measures of intensive parenting ideologies (IPAQ) for this population, and also to help practitioners be sensitive as they talk to women about their obligations as parents and as they target sources of beneficial or problematic parenting beliefs. In other words, these findings will help to detect whether intensive parenting expectations within correctional settings influence women's parenting ideologies as well as how correctional programming could help mitigate women's development of problematic beliefs about parenting that directly conflict with their other obligations and opportunities. Like most in-depth research conducted with justice-involved women (Arditti & Few, 2008; Brown & Bloom, 2008; Michalsen, 2011; Morash, 2010; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2008; Van Voorhis et al., 2012, 2013), these accounts could be useful in creating similar scales to help fathers dealing with parenting problems and expectations as parents as they negotiate their terms of community supervision and the stresses that accompany parenting.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations remain for the current study. Although the sample size is limited in the regressions between parenting problems and measures of well-being ($n = 98$) and recidivism ($n = 156$), these subsamples are larger than those in previous qualitative research on motherhood. Future mixed-methods and quantitative research is required to fully develop a scale reflecting parenting problems and parenting ideologies among justice-involved mothers. More work needs to be done measuring how the different parenting problems overlap and are mutually reinforcing.

The sample is also based on substance-involved mothers on probation and parole, and although this reflects the majority of women in trouble with the law, the findings may not translate to mothers involved in the law without struggles with substances. Additionally, the caseload of the agent and the race and gender identity of justice-involved mothers should be

examined in future research. And future studies should also consider departmental and agent characteristics that could complicate women's experiences of parenting, well-being, and recidivism. Though agent-level effects were ruled out in this study, there are likely characteristics of supervision agents that could provide insight into the best practices for supervising and assisting mothers on community supervision. Community characteristics and movements such as initiatives to reduce crime or reduce prison populations should also be examined as such factors may help explain differences and changes in recidivism across agencies (McCleary, 1992). For example, community characteristics including crime rates, resources, and community corrections departmental caseload should be assessed to see if such circumstances could help explain variations in the relationships among risks for recidivism, parenting problems, and parenting ideologies. Cultural norms and trends in crime in the area should also be incorporated into such analysis as resources to spend time with clients to discuss and address parenting problems with clients likely vary (Seng & Lurigio, 2005). In addition, areas with fewer resources may also prioritize infractions such as violations for detecting and violating clients for more serious crimes (Klinger, 1997). More qualitative analyses should be conducted at the agency level to identify specific influences on the ways in which supervision agents and correctional workers discuss parenting and how they detect and address their parenting problems. There are many challenges in studying and providing advice to criminal justice agencies because of the fractured nature of the system (Walker, 1993). Thus, more research is needed on the procedures and discourse across departments to identify what aspects may be risk factors or strengths against recidivism. Identifying agent and agency-level characteristics that influence violation outcomes may help improve correctional programming, which in turn would lessen the monetary and social costs of corrections on individuals and communities (Petersilia, 2003).

In addition, to extending this research based on organizational practices and culture at both the qualitative and quantitative levels, this research should be replicated to account for more recent experiences of justice-involved mothers. Not only would that enable the examination of the reliability of these findings, but it could also help detect how extreme changes such as financial, environmental, and health catastrophes could impact justice-involved mothers' parenting problems, parenting ideologies, and their risks for recidivism. For example, researchers have found the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted individuals, and communities across the world by removing opportunities to work. These issues have been particularly problematic for single mothers who often had to make sacrifices before the COVID-19 pandemic, but then had to navigate job opportunities when children were isolated at home, necessitating virtual learning (Belisie, Salisbury, & Merceir, 2023). The need to supervise, assist children with learning from home, and even helping children deal with their own stress from being isolated from friends and classmates would likely present a special set of challenges for justice-involved mothers. Not only could there be new types of stressors, but the COVID-19 pandemic could also limit women's ability to complete supervision requirements, acquire needed resources, and meet their personal goals. Such an extreme shift in societal norms regarding the ability to meet in person with supervision agents and the increased, unconditional release of incarcerated individuals could also result in differences in how mothers form and are subject to different parenting ideologies. There are many intricacies related to large shifts in cultural norms such as those created based on COVID-19, and many have been negative (Belisie et al., 2023). However, some of the adaptations such as moving to tele-health services and virtual meetings could reduce some of the parenting problems justice-involved mothers who had limited resources such as a lack of transportation and limited local resources as they sought treatment and

navigated supervision requirements. Despite the contribution and potential for this study and coding scheme to lend to more specific scales to assess motherhood and well-being, additional research is needed to validate and improve scales that could be developed from this study. Overall, more recent replications and in other locations could be used to detect other parenting problems, parenting ideologies, and influences on parenting ideologies for justice-involved mothers.

Although the creation of new and revised motherhood-related scales requires additional data collection, some ideas and steps to assist justice-involved mothers could be made based on the findings from this study. Again, continued research is needed on the topics explored, and those include replications as well as different approaches that could yield insights missed through this mixed methods study. For example, geographical approaches and consideration of likely risks near justice-involved women's residences including access to resources could offer some insight into how to select participants as well as how to evaluate their personal and parental lives. There are many directions to build on these findings which could be useful for researchers, practitioners, and especially families.

Policy Implications

In addition to conducting and evaluating surveys to assess parent-related risks and needs, this study highlights several other ways to assist justice-involved mothers and their families. One common parenting problems mothers faced was obtaining resources to care for children, particularly as they navigated supervision requirements. Some primary ways to manage these issues based on the mothers' accounts include aiding women in finding low-cost or free forms of childcare. This came up for justice-involved mothers, but mothers from general samples also share the sentiment of struggling to support children financially without assistance and grappling

with the need to put their personal aspirations aside to care for young children (Douglas & Michaels, 2005; Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016; Liss et al., 2013a).

Another pervasive parenting problem among justice-involved mothers was finding reliable and legal transportation to escort children to school and activities. This was particularly problematic given their need to work and comply with time-consuming supervision requirements which could be long and dangerous commutes.

This work also demonstrates the importance of talking to mothers about parenting deliberately and sensitively. Those working with justice-involved mothers should consider assessing mothers' subscriptions to intensive parenting as that could guide them as they discuss realistic expectations about parenting. In discussing realistic expectations, practitioners can also shift focus from urgency and potential feelings of failure to helping mothers find other sources of support they may need during hardships and periods of transition. The stigma of parenting "failures" and being a "bad mother" appears for many mothers in the U.S. (Granja et al., 2015; Hays, 1996; Henderson et al., 2016; Liss et al., 2013a). Prior research and the quantitative findings of risks for recidivism related to intensive parenting beliefs and parenting problems in the study show that policy changes should be considered beyond the criminal justice system. Specifically, policymakers and the media should shift away from the negative rhetoric related to mothers and recognize the difficulties mothers face raising children when they lack support and when they struggle with mental health and substance use issues. Relatedly, a shift away from a punitive approach for those deemed low risk would provide funding to invest in struggling families thereby reducing the social and financial costs of intergenerational justice system involvement.

Conclusion

This study shows how mothers from a variety of backgrounds and who have faced different life stressors often still embrace and aspire to achieve the intensive parenting values entrenched in the U.S. culture. Justice-involved mothers, who are often single mothers (Glaze & Maruschak, 2008), are no exception despite the many parental obstacles they face while managing personal issues and legal punishments. Results from this study reveal justice-involved mothers' parenting problems as well as the ways they adapt to meet or justify countering intensive parenting ideals. The breadth of the qualitative data in tandem with the relatively large sample offers validation of prior research on the barriers and anguish experienced by justice-involved mothers who recognize the centrality of parenting in women's identities and the unique responsibility of mothers in children's lives (Adams, 2020; Brown & Bloom, 2009; Garcia, 2014; Granja et al., 2015; Stone, 2014; Stone & Rydberg, 2019). The mixed methods study will guide the creation of parenting problem scales that can be used by practitioners working with mothers on supervision. The qualitative data can also be used to create additional surveys to gauge the parenting ideologies of justice-involved mothers that need to be refined to capture their adaptations to achieve intensive parenting goals and their subscriptions that counter or supersede intensive parenting. The lessons this research and subsequent studies can catalyze include understanding how to better assist marginalized and justice-involved mothers. One crucial focus should be on discovering ways to create more realistic standards of motherhood as assistance for struggling families that could reduce intergenerational problems and improve the livelihood of those in marginalized communities. This research also highlights how gender-responsive programming should be carefully assessed and implemented to best assist women with the most pertinent problems based on their perspectives and problems. And in this study, women are

concerned about their relationships and ability to contact their children. They also worry about harm that children could experience during periods of separation and when children are placed with unknown or abusive individuals. This study also reinforces previous research indicating women's inclination to be reunited with their children (Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; Richie, 2001). Therefore, communications about parenting, financial, and psychological assistance for justice-involved mothers' children should be paired with reunification plans. These plans could include mediation with the children, their caregivers, and other family members who could be assisted and directed on ways to communicate and help the justice-involved mother. The words of the participants underscore the importance of correctional programming that fosters familial relationships, as well as gender-responsive programming that includes policies that reduce parental stress and increase the likelihood of familial reunification. To achieve the latter, perhaps mediation and reconciliation forums for incarcerated mothers and family members should take place. These programs should also be implemented in tandem with policies aimed at improving outcomes for mothers in areas such as drug treatment, employment, housing, and resource accessibility to reduce their odds of reoffending and to enhance the well-being of justice-involved mothers and their children.

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APPENDIX A: PARENTING PROBLEMS CODEBOOK

Directions: Parenting problems are defined by the challenges, obstacles, and stressors the women in the sample describe concerning parenting their children. The problems should be coded into the following categories and additional problems that occur during the coding process can be added to capture the parenting problems for this sample of mothers on probation or parole.

1. **Resources** – this parenting problem should be coded for women who discuss how parenting complicates or is complicated by their pursuit of education and employment. Limited social support.
2. **Criminal justice system involvement** – this parenting problem should be coded for women who discuss issues of how parenting complicates or is complicated by their involvement with the justice system through incarceration and supervision requirements.
3. **Child custody issues** – this parenting problem is related to issues with custody such as seeing children or having the amount of custody they desire.
4. **Substance use/mental health/physical health** – this parenting problem should be coded for women that discuss issues how substance use, mental health problems, and their treatment or need for treatment complicate or are complicated by parenting.
5. **Neighborhood Danger** – this parenting problem should be coded for women who discuss how parenting complicates or is complicated by their neighborhood conditions including crime in their neighborhood and communities.
6. **Personal Negative Impacts of Others** - this parenting problem should be coded for women who discuss issues with family members and other people, including them being negative influences on her.
7. **Child Issues** – this parenting problem should be coded for women who discuss An issue related to child behavior and/or their well-being.
8. **Personal Negative Impacts of Others on Child(ren)** - this parenting problem should be coded for women that discuss issues with family members and other people, including them being negative influences on child(ren).
9. **Parenting Ideology Conflict** – this parenting problem should be coded for women that discuss a conflict between parenting beliefs/actions and barriers or outcomes.

APPENDIX B: PARENTING IDEOLOGY CODEBOOK

Directions: When women discuss parenting practices their discussion should be coded into themes below including the characteristics of the parenting practices (e.g. if they are consistent with specific themes of intensive parenting or opposing themes), the influences on their parenting practices (e.g. their own experiences with their upbringing, their interactions with supervision agents) as well as for the effect of their parenting beliefs or the expectations that they are exposed to (positive, negative, neutral, unclear).

1. Characteristics of parenting ideology

- a. Intensive parenting ideology
 - i. Essentialism
 - ii. Fulfillment
 - iii. Stimulation
 - iv. All-consuming
 - v. Child-centered
 - vi. Child-Centered for Personal Reasons
 - vii. GoodBad Parent
- b. Opposing intensive parenting ideology/conventional
 - i. Personal Goals
 - ii. Alternative Care
 - iii. Mistakes and frustration
 - iv. Physical Aggression to Protect Child
 - v. Physical Punishment of Child
- c. Unclear

2. Influences parenting ideology

- a. Personal experiences
 - i. Upbringing
 - 1. Positive upbringing
 - 2. Negative upbringing
 - ii. Personal Criminal Justice Experiences
 - iii. Necessity
- b. Based on influences or expectations from others:
 - i. Family
 - ii. Friends
 - iii. Associates
 - 1. Peers in criminal justice system
 - 2. Peers in self-help groups and other services
 - 3. Peers at work/school
 - 4. Teachers in school
 - 5. Other acquaintances
 - iv. Practitioners and Programs
 - 1. Supervision agents
 - 2. Other criminal justice works
 - 3. Workers in parenting programs
 - 4. Counselors or therapists

- 5. Physicians
 - 6. Workers in other programs
 - 7. Pamphlets and other material provided by practitioners
- v. Media
- vi. Other
- vii. Unclear