

educational and self-help centers in the community. She enrolled in a group at a local agency that provided free General Educational Development (GED) training, and she was able to enhance her reading skills during her stay at the shelter. By attending a group at the agency, Brenna met several single mothers in the area and built a new support network in the community.

Throughout this process, Brenna struggled with feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, loneliness, and powerlessness. I worked with her to validate and process these feelings and assisted her in contacting a local therapist with experience working with survivors of dating abuse and domestic violence. Although she was initially hesitant to engage in a therapeutic relationship, I assisted Brenna in making an informed decision to do so. She attended weekly therapy sessions throughout the duration of her stay at the shelter. Brenna's resiliency, self-sufficiency, and dedication to providing a healthy life for her unborn child gave her the motivation to set difficult goals, and she used her time at the shelter to attain them. One month prior to giving birth, Brenna's housing application was accepted and she moved into a small two-bedroom apartment. Working with Social Services, she was granted a voucher and was able to furnish her apartment. I accompanied Brenna to the supermarket and assisted her in planning a monthly food budget with her Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and WIC funds. Through work with her therapist, Brenna cut off all contact with Cameron, choosing to raise her child on her own. She said she felt like a new person when she established a new phone number and address without informing Cameron, and when she left the shelter, although nervous, she expressed a sense of confidence in her ability to move forward with her new baby.

(Plummer 58-60)

Plummer, Sara-Beth, Sara Makris, Sally Brocksen. *Social Work Case Studies: Concentration Year*. Laureate Publishing, 10/21/13. VitalBook file.

Research

(Plummer 61)

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Social Work Research: Chi Square

Molly, an administrator with a regional organization that advocates for alternatives to long-term prison sentences for nonviolent offenders, asked a team of researchers to conduct an outcome evaluation of a new vocational rehabilitation program for recently

paroled prison inmates. The primary goal of the program is to promote full-time employment among its participants.

To evaluate the program, the evaluators decided to use a quasi-experimental research design. The program enrolled 30 individuals to participate in the new program.

Additionally, there was a waiting list of 30 other participants who planned to enroll after the first group completed the program. After the first group of 30 participants completed the vocational program (the “intervention” group), the researchers compared those participants’ levels of employment with the 30 on the waiting list (the “comparison” group).

In order to collect data on employment levels, the probation officers for each of the 60 people in the sample (those in both the intervention and comparison groups) completed a short survey on the status of each client in the sample. The survey contained demographic questions that included an item that inquired about the employment level of the client. This was measured through variables identified as none, part-time, or full-time. A hard copy of the survey was mailed to each probation officer and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided for return of the survey to the researchers.

After the surveys were returned, the researchers entered the data into an SPSS program for statistical analysis. Because both the independent variable (participation in the vocational rehabilitation program) and dependent variable (employment outcome) used nominal/categorical measurement, the bivariate statistic selected to compare the outcome of the two groups was the Pearson chi-square.

After all of the information was entered into the SPSS program, the following output charts were generated:

TABLE 1. CASE PROCESSING SUMMARY

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
Program Participation *Employment	59	98.3%	1	1.7%	60	100.0%

**TABLE 2. PROGRAM PARTICIPATION *EMPLOYMENT CROSS
TABULATION**

			Employment			Total
			None	Part-Time	Full-Time	
Program Participation	Intervention Group	Count % within Program Participation	5 16.7%	7 23.3%	18 60.0%	30 100.0%
	Comparison Group	Count % within Program Participation	16 55.2%	7 24.1%	6 20.7%	29 100.0%
Total		Count % within Program Participation	21 35.6%	14 23.7%	24 40.7%	59 100.0%

TABLE 3. CHI-SQUARE TESTS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.748 ^a	2	.003
Likelihood Ratio	12.321	2	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.548	1	.001
N of Valid Cases			59

^a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.88.

The first table, titled Case Processing Summary, provided the sample size ($N = 59$).

Information for one of the 60 participants was not available, while the information was collected for all of the other 59 participants.

The second table, Program Participation Employment Cross Tabulation, provided the frequency table, which showed that among participants in the intervention group, 18 or 60% were found to be employed full time, while 7 or 23% were found to be employed part time, and 5 or 17% were unemployed. The corresponding numbers for the comparison group (parolees who had not yet enrolled in the program but were on the waiting list for admission) showed that only 6 or 21% were employed full-time, while 7 or 24% were employed part time, and 16 or 55% were unemployed.

The third table, which provided the outcome of the Pearson chi-square test, found that the difference between the intervention and comparison groups were highly significant, with a p value of .003, which is significantly beyond the usual alpha-level of .05 that most researchers use to establish significance.

These results indicate that the vocational rehabilitation intervention program may be effective at promoting full-time employment among recently paroled inmates. However, there are multiple limitations to this study, including that 1) no random assignment was used, and 2) it is possible that differences between the groups were due to preexisting differences among the participants (such as selection bias).

Potential future studies could include a matched comparison group or, if possible, a control group. In addition, future studies should assess not only whether or not a recently paroled individual obtains employment but also the degree to which he or she is able to maintain employment, earn a living wage, and satisfy other conditions of probation.

(Plummer 63-65)

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Social Work Research: Planning a Program Evaluation

Joan is a social worker who is currently enrolled in a social work PhD program. She is planning to conduct her dissertation research project with a large nonprofit child welfare organization where she has worked as a site coordinator for many years. She has already approached the agency director with her interest, and the leadership team of the agency