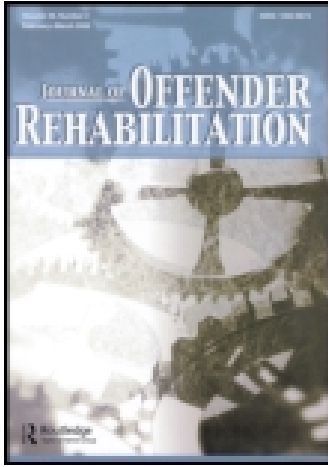


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Application of Positive Criminology in Retorno—A Jewish Therapeutic Community for People with Addictions

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This article explores the application of positive criminology principles in the recovery process of people with addictions in Retorno—a Jewish therapeutic community in Israel. The participants, 10 adult residents, were administered in-depth, semistructured, individual interviews. The findings highlight the importance of positive experiences to achieve a sense of integration on multidimensional level—self, social, and spiritual—throughout the recovery process. This progress towards greater integration represents the central aspect of positive criminology, which emphasizes the unifying and integrating forces in individual, group, social, and spiritual dimensions. The most significant theme for our participants was their self-integration, which they described as a growing sense of coherence, well-being, and emotional maturity. In addition, it was found that achieving a sense of multi-integration was associated with decreased self-centeredness, a trend that may correlate with the ability to accept and internalize prosocial messages and therefore reduce criminal behavior. Theoretical implications are discussed.

KEYWORDS *positive criminology, therapeutic community, substance abuse, recovery, sense of integration*

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INTRODUCTION

Positive criminology is a new conceptual perspective of criminology that encompasses several theories and models (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). This new broad perspective focuses on the encounters of individuals with integrative forces and influences that are experienced as positive (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013; Wexler, 2013). Positive criminology is implemented in the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals who have demonstrated deviant and criminal behavior by emphasizing positive experiences that may potentially prevent or discourage continued criminal behavior, including drug abuse and addiction (Openhaim & Timor, 2005; Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013). In recent years, new approaches have been developed for treating offenders and drug addicts that are actually practical applications of positive criminology. In light of these developments, the main purpose of the present study was to explore the applications of positive criminology principles in the recovery process at Retorno—a Jewish therapeutic community (TC) in Israel for people with addictions. Although positive criminology was not a conscious part of the Retorno program, in practice the TC adopted some of its principles, which are the main subject of this research.

Positive Criminology

The term *positive criminology* is a newly defined concept based on the earlier “positive psychology,” which emphasizes the influence of positive experiences on individuals (Gable & Haidt, 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The definition of positive criminology refers to individuals’ encounters with forces and influences that are experienced as positive and support their crime desistance by different formal and informal means (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). Thus, positive criminology emphasizes the importance of positive, humanistic encounters to the recovery process (Elisha, Idisis, & Ronel, 2013). The common thread of different positive criminology interventions is an emphasis on unifying and integrating forces in the individual, group, social, and spiritual dimensions (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013). These counter the sense of existential separation and the individual experiences of loneliness and social, existential, and spiritual alienation that are typical of people with addictions (Humphreys & Kaskutas, 1995). Positive criminology focuses special attention on the shift from “problem-and-treatment-only” paradigms to a more comprehensive recovery paradigm, which describes a process in which behavioral problems are gradually resolved by means of developing physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, and occupational health (Best, 2010; McNeill, 2006; White & Kurtz, 2005), thereby transforming the negative self-narrative into a positive, or at least a normative one (Maruna, 1997, 2004). This broad perception of recovery is similar to the comprehensive perception of substance abuse disorder and rehabilitation that are common in TCs. TC treatment is based on the

assumption that substance abuse is a multidimensional disorder of the whole person (De Leon, 2000; De Leon, Melnick, Cao, & Wexler, 2006), so that the recovery process involves multidimensional changes in the form of a drug-free lifestyle and a modified personal identity (De Leon, 1995, 2000).

The Therapeutic Community

The TC is one of the prominent approaches in the field of addiction treatment (De Leon, 1995, 2000, 2010). TCs are long-term drug-free residential environments that use a hierarchical model in which the treatment stages correspond with increased levels of personal and social responsibility (De Leon, 2000). Frequently they are treated as an alternative custodial option—they represent a “strong-arm” rehabilitation service that works with courts, probation, and parole (Gowan & Whetstone, 2012).

The treatment perception in TCs is based on the notion that drug abuse is a disorder of the whole person and that addiction is the symptom and not the essence of the problem. Therefore the overall goal of the TC treatment is to change the negative patterns of behaviors, thinking and feeling (De Leon, 2000). TCs differ from other residential treatment models in several ways. First, the TC provides holistic treatment that is focused on drug use disorder, the person, recovery, and right living (McDonald & Leukefeld, 2005). Second, the primary therapeutic agent in a TC is the community itself, which also provides the social context and environment of the treatment: the community is the therapeutic method. According to this approach, the community is composed of a hierarchy of peers and staff members, who serve as guides, role models, and key agents of change (De Leon, 2000). Other aspects of the TC’s “community as method” include a focus on changing negative patterns of thinking and behavior through individual and group therapy, group sessions with peers, community-based learning, confrontation, games, and role-playing. Third, the self-help and mutual-aid approach is another fundamental principle of the TC, implying that individuals in treatment are the main contributors to the change process. Finally, the emphasis on community and structure serve as the cornerstones of treatment in TCs (De Leon, 1995, 2000, 2010). Numerous studies have found an association between participation in a TC and the positive results of reduction in both recidivism and substance abuse (Edelen et al., 2007; Morral, McCaffrey, & Ridgeway, 2004). The TC model has now been adopted in many countries and represents a globally recognized, essential component of drug abuse treatment. In Israel, there are several TCs; one of them is Retorno.

Retorno—An Orthodox Jewish Therapeutic Community

Retorno (Spanish for “return,” symbolizing a “return to life”) was established in 1990 in Mexico by Rabbi Eitan Eckstein, with the purpose of serving as a

psycho-educational rehabilitation center (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). In 1997, Retorno's founder introduced the model in Israel.

Retorno is a unique, Orthodox Jewish TC designed primarily to treat addicts who are Orthodox Jews. However, it also treats non-Orthodox, as well as non-Jewish, clients. The atmosphere at Retorno emphasizes some Jewish values and rules, such as observance of the Sabbath, kashrut dietary rules, and more. Provisions are made for full religious observance, but nobody is obligated to observe the commandments (*mitzvot*). Spiritual growth is a strong element in the Retorno recovery process, and although not every patient is religious, all are required to engage in some spiritual activity, such as participating in group prayer.

The Israeli health and welfare authorities and the Israeli Anti-Drug Authority have officially recognized and authorized Retorno as a professional institution for treating addicts (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). Retorno operates two separate TCs (a total of approximately 90 clients), one for 50 adults (over the age of 18) and the other for 38 adolescents (boys and girls ages 14 to 18). The average duration of treatment, which takes place in full professional residential facilities, is about 12 to 18 months for adolescents and about 9 to 12 months for adults. The length of stay in TC has often varied from 15 to 24 months (Melnick & De Leon, 1999; Nemes, Wish, & Messina, 1999). Moreover research on TCs has found them to be most effective for individuals who stay in treatment the longest (Condelli & Hubbard, 1994).

Admission to Retorno is conducted in two ways: through the welfare authorities and by private application. The welfare authority refers juvenile drug offenders and adults who have been required by court order to undergo treatment. Approximately 65% of the juvenile residents and 32% of the adults in Retorno come to the TC by means of such a "criminal pathway"; approximately 78% of the juvenile residents and 74% of the adult residents have criminal records, mainly for drug and alcohol abuse, drug trafficking, property offenses, or robbery. Thus the Israeli criminal justice system considers treatment in Retorno as an alternative to imprisonment. In addition, the welfare authority also refers at-risk adolescents to Retorno. In the case of private applications, the clients or their families finance their treatment. Retorno also operates a special department for the purpose of outreach and enrollment of youth at-risk for treatment (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011).

The basic premise of the treatment at Retorno is that addiction is a dysfunctional attempt to cope with emotional pain, past and present trauma, and distress, and that this attempt only intensifies the emotional pain. The therapeutic process in Retorno is based on a 12-step program combined with Jewish philosophy and values and multidimensional intervention in four spheres: individual treatment, group intervention, communal intervention, and family intervention.

In the current study we reanalyzed qualitative data that were gathered in an earlier, broader, mixed-method (quantitative and qualitative) study

(Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). This reanalysis of some of the qualitative data concentrated on positive criminology principles, a topic that was not included in the former report. Therefore, the aim of the present research was to explore the implications of positive criminology principles in the recovery process of residents in the adult section of Retorno. Such an exploration can shed light on the role of positive criminology as a guiding comprehensive recovery paradigm for enhancing the rehabilitation of addicted and offending individuals.

METHOD

The current study was based on qualitative phenomenological research of clients' experiences at Retorno and their subjective perceptions of the process of change and recovery that followed (Kockelmans, 1987; Polkinghorne, 1989). The analysis focuses on the application of positive criminology principles in the process of recovery at Retorno from the client's perspective. Following the phenomenological tradition (e.g., Husserl, 1952; Polkinghorne, 1989; Van Menen, 1997), in order to get a full impression of the clients' subjective perceptions, we refrained from hypothesizing about their perceptions and attempted to bracket any preconceptions. Accordingly, the analysis and presentation of data are based on categories of meaning that were revealed in the clients' narratives.

Participants

The research participants were 10 residents (9 men and 1 woman) from the adult therapeutic community in Retorno. The length of the participants' stay at Retorno ranged from 7 to 9 months at the time of the interviews. At the beginning of our wider research project, the sample consisted of 50 participants; however, 32 of them (64%) dropped out after about three months of treatment—they served as the focus of another part of the original broad research project (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). The remaining sample consisted of 18 clients. We interviewed residents who had entered the TC after we began our research and were about to complete the course of treatment. There were no other criteria of selection of participants for the interview; however, we stopped after 10 interviews, when we sensed that the accumulated data had reached a saturation point (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007; Shkedi, 2003). The ages of the participants ranged from 21 to 45 years ($M = 34$, $SD = 7.36$). Three were married with children, two were divorced, one was widowed, and the others were single; two had completed elementary school, five had completed high school, and three had obtained an academic education. Two participants described themselves as secular and all the others

reported some degree of religiosity or faith in God. They were all Jews; one of them had been born a Christian and converted to Judaism in his youth. They had diverse addiction backgrounds: alcohol (one participant), illegal drugs (six participants), prescription drugs (one participant), gambling (one participant), and Internet (one participant). Four participants had had previous detentions/arrests for different offenses.

Instruments

The participants were administered in-depth, semistructured individual interviews, guided by an interview manual that was formulated especially for this part of the research. The interview was conducted as an open conversation in which the guidelines provided initial direction, but it proceeded primarily according to the data revealed in its course. Such interviews enable participants to deeply express their personal narratives (Patton, 1990; Shkedi, 2003). Based on the phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1989), our objective was to enable the interviewees to express how they perceived the treatment program that the TC offered them, how they perceived their personal changes, and what their participation in the program meant to them. The rich data that was thus gathered provided us with variables that were not included in the original study and that we have reinterpreted here as representing positive criminology principles.

Procedure

We interviewed the participants about two months before they completed their treatment (after 7–10 months in treatment, from July 2008 through October 2008). At the time of the interviews, the participants were already familiar with the research aims and team, and they participated voluntarily and willingly. Each participant signed an informed consent, after receiving assurances of confidentiality regarding their personal details and their right to cease their participation at any time. They could refuse to answer any question or terminate the interview at any stage. The research team strictly maintained the confidentiality of the participants. In the following, we used pseudonyms to further protect their confidentiality. An institutional review board approved the current study prior to data collection.

The interviews were conducted at Retorno. Each interview lasted an average of about 75 minutes. All were either audio recorded and transcribed or recorded directly in writing by the interviewers.

The current research was a reanalysis of data collected in a previous, wider study (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). In a phenomenological analysis of the qualitative data in the initial study (Polkinghorne, 1989; Shkedi, 2003), we found categories of meaning that represented positive

criminology, a subject that was beyond the scope of that research project. Consequently, in the current study we reanalyzed the data, looking for categories that might represent positive criminology. We carefully read the interviews again, identified meaningful categories of positive criminology, and organized these categories in a new analytical order, clustering them into three themes of higher significance. In the next stage, we returned to the data from the individual interviews, and extracted quotations associated with the different categories. Finally, we summarized them, as presented in the following section, illustrating each category with representative quotations from the interviewees. Throughout this process we carefully discussed the accumulated data together, to achieve mutual peer validation.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the interviews from the perspective of positive criminology revealed three themes that represent three dimensions of integration of participants—self, social, and spiritual. According to the emerging literature of positive criminology (e.g., Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013), these three dimensions of integration represent the central aspects of this perspective. In the following we describe these integration themes and illustrate them with direct quotes from the interviews. As noted, the names of the interviewees are fictitious, for the sake of confidentiality.

Participants reported their sense of transformation and integration in the aforementioned self, social, and spiritual dimensions. They attributed these changes mainly to the social support they had received from the staff and members at Retorno. According to the positive criminology approach, social support is a major contributor of recovery and rehabilitation that leads to unification with the self and with others (Ronel & Elisha, 2011). This transformation towards greater integration can be understood as another expression of positive criminology, which emphasizes the unifying and integrating forces in individual, group, social, and spiritual dimensions (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013).

Self-Integration

The aspect that participants indicated as most problematic in their lives prior to Retorno was their mental state, which they connected to their past emotional injuries (neglect, abandonment, and physical abuse), and which they claimed led them to their addiction. Therefore the experience of a growing integration of the self was meaningful for them. Participants' accounts revealed that their self-integration was reflected in a sense of coherence and mental well-being, along with emotional maturity, which increased their adaptability and facilitated their recovery process.

ACHIEVING A SENSE OF COHERENCE

One positive internal resource that is associated with resilience, recovery, and healing and emphasized by positive criminology is a sense of coherence that expresses the individual's confidence in their ability to cope with life's demands (Antonovsky, 1979; Kobasa, 1982). Sense of coherence, which helps individuals cope with stress and recover from trauma, is positively associated with well-being, the perception of receiving assistance from others, and social support (Chen, 2006). Indeed, a common account that was strongly expressed by the participants referred to reduction in the internal and external chaos (Timor, 2001) that characterized their lives prior to their arrival at Retorno. According to these participants, during their recovery process, they gradually began to acknowledge and seriously address their personal problems, utilizing the different means provided at Retorno. Gradually they felt less confused and experienced hints of inner calm and a sense of coherence that grew stronger as they progressed in their recovery:

Gradually I achieved some peace of mind here. At first I was busy with my anger at others, but gradually I began to realize that I was paying a high price for being stuck there. I began to relax through imagery—I envisioned the sea, dolphins, things that soothed me. (Rafi)

Many things have changed in me since I got to Retorno. At first, I was confused about many things in my life—my identity, my religion, everything was mixed up. . . . When I first got here I was screaming and crying about what I went through in life. Gradually I became a new person—with no confusion and more organized conceptually. (Hagai)

ACHIEVING A SENSE OF WELL-BEING

Another profound change from the perspective of positive criminology was related to the increased sense of well-being of the participants. Some reported a development of positive feelings and perceptions (e.g., feel good, happy, hopeful, faithful, optimistic, and gratitude) toward themselves and others, which increased their mental well-being). They attributed these to the warmth, accepting, and nonjudgmental approach they experienced at Retorno, which caused them to develop similar positive attitudes. This can be regarded as growth following stressful incidents. It is expressed in focusing on the positive aspects of life while developing positive feelings and perceptions after exposure to positive encounters, such as social support and human acceptance, as emphasized in positive criminology and indicated in various other studies (e.g., Ai & Park, 2005; Laufer & Solomon, 2006; Maruna, 2002):

Today I am much calmer and relaxed, more open and honest. . . . That's what I learned here, and it feels good, makes me feel like a different person. (Abraham)

Here I learned to live a more quality life. First of all, to feel good about what I have, feel happy. I learned that over time things work out. Today I have more faith, more confidence that things will work out. (Jacob)

Some participants—especially those who had experienced neglect or abuse in their childhood—expressed forgiveness for past wrongs of those who harmed them and deliberate focus on the present and future for their own mental well-being. Similarly, restorative justice stresses damaged relationships and the need to repair them, “to right wrongs—to help heal and better the physical and nonphysical damage” (Ronel & Elisha, 2011, p. 317). This can be regarded as another expression of the positive criminology perspective (Ronel & Elisha, 2011; Quinney, 1991):

I also made a change with my mother. In the past I used to blame her for all that had happened to me. . . . But I decided to forgive her and accept her the way she is. I realized that I cannot change her; I can only change myself. Today I say to her on the phone: “I love you and tell everyone I love them,” and she also tells me that she loves me. (Jacob)

Here I find a lot of good things in me. Today I forgive rather than stay angry. Although my anger about things that happened to me in the past is justified, it should be behind me, I should move on. (Rafi)

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

In addition to the aforementioned statements, participants indicated that thanks to the broad support they received at Retorno, they experienced emotional changes, reflected in a better understanding of themselves and others, in taking personal responsibility for their lives, and by their self-acceptance. This can be regarded as an expression of their emotional maturity, associated with successful rehabilitation. Indeed, studies conducted among offenders and addicted individuals have indicated the importance of emotional maturity to their rehabilitation process, which involves developing a positive self-identity and finding new meaning in life (Biernacki, 1986; Erikson, 1963; Maruna, 2002):

I experienced a great change here—in my way of thinking, my perceptions, everything. . . . Actually, it is about connecting to myself, knowing myself, knowing who I am . . . that’s the biggest change. (Shiri)

Today I can deal with problems, feel good about myself, without an inferiority complex. . . . Today I accept myself with all my failures, can even smile and talk about it without shame. (David)

Social Integration

Another significant aspect of the participants’ change, according to them, was social unification with family members and peers. From the positive

criminology perspective, this growing ability to connect with others reflects mutual social acceptance. It is often derived from the use of positive components such as love, affection, forgiveness, altruism, and gratefulness, which are associated with successful rehabilitation (Ronel, 2006; Seligman & Steen, 2005), instead of negative elements such as shaming, rejection, and exclusion (Braithwaite, 1989; Harris & Maruna, 2006).

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Participants reported that they had established authentic friendships with their group members at Retorno, thanks to the solidarity, mutual support, and acceptance, which later also affected their relationships with others (staff and relatives). This was a dramatically different from their experience of relationships in the past, which had been characterized by superficiality, self-interest, and negative emotions. The ability to connect with peers and to establish meaningful social bonds with them based on a normative value system, to a degree not experienced before, is considered as a route to enhance avoidance of crime and promote the rehabilitation process:

Here I got close with several people, from the group and staff, with whom I'll stay in touch outside [Retorno] as well. I know they will always be there for me, as I'll be there for them. These are people who really love me; they really care about me, not because they want something from me. It's something I never had before. (Shai)

I never felt alone here, I've got a lot of friends and people who love me and I love them. And yes, despite all the difficulties here, I managed to recover. (Tom)

REPAIRING RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELATIVES

As previously noted, the friendly relationships participants established with peers and staff at Retorno positively influenced their intimate relationships with their relatives (especially parents, siblings, and/or spouse). The positive change on the social level was expressed in greater use of positive components of relationship between participants and relatives (e.g., emotional openness, sharing, gratitude, and forgiveness), which in turn helped them restore and strengthen family ties. This might be described as a positive flywheel effect, where the better the relationship, the more use of these components, and the greater the use of them, the more the relationship improves. Actually, it represents implementation of the reintegrative shaming and restorative justice principles, which present repairing relationships as a necessary condition for successful rehabilitation (Braithwaite, 1989; Harris & Maruna, 2006):

Here I began to connect with my family. Here I got the courage, with the help of the social worker, to say to my mother: "Yes, I'm mad at you

about things I went through in life, and yes, Mom, I need your love.”
(Avner)

Today there is more love in my life, more love with my wife and children. Everything is getting better and pleasant in all respects. (Rafi)

Spiritual Integration

Some participants, regardless of their religious background, reported the experience of a kind of a spiritual awakening. They attributed this spiritual transformation to religion and to the 12-step program included in the treatment curriculum at Retorno, which were often perceived as similar in character. The transformation was reflected, according to the participants, in a certain degree of minimizing their former marked self-centeredness and in their development of some spiritual/religion faith. They claimed that the spiritual change assisted their recovery, due to its inherent positive elements, which inspired and empowered them.

SPIRITUAL FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Participants praised the new spiritual tools they acquired in Retorno through religion and the 12-step program (e.g., moral values, gratitude, internal boundaries, and modesty), which aroused their spiritual faith. This can be perceived as a further unification of participants—unification with a spiritual entity, whether they call it a “higher power” or God:

The 12 steps include values that I was raised on, knew, and implemented, in part, without knowing the program before . . . I have spiritual belief, I believe that God, who created me and knows my weaknesses, knows my solution as well. (Abraham)

Religion here is part of my spirituality. Prayer makes me feel good; the good and beautiful words of the prayer inspire me for the entire day. This strengthens me, gives me power, makes me feel good, linking me to good things. (Rafi)

DECREASING SELF-CENTEREDNESS

Some participants also indicated that the spiritual-therapeutic elements in the 12-step program and Jewish religious values helped them overcome their self-centeredness and better connect with other people in general. This was in contrast to their past tendency to feel separated from others and to concentrate on themselves and their own self-pity, which in turn deepened their addiction. The change enabled them to establish better, healthier relationships with others, including their relatives:

I learned that I should not be alone, because when I was alone, I concentrated on myself, falling into self-pity, thinking I was the most miserable

in the world and there was no hope, only despair. Friends here have always been with me and encouraged me, so I will not be alone. (Avner)

To me it is a kind of spiritual development—learning to contain others, listening and talking with others, overcoming your self-centeredness. . . . It is another kind of spiritual development for me. (Hagai)

DIFFICULTY IN CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Naturally, not all the participants reported similar changes, in terms of quality and/or intensity. This might be explained by their stage in the rehabilitation process, as well as their personal characteristics, family background, and other factors. It also indicates that rehabilitation is an ongoing and ambivalent process that includes progress and regression and requires patience, as positive criminology and other researchers have stressed (Maruna, 2002).

For example, some participants noted that they still had difficulties forming relationships with others, at Retorno and outside the TC as well. For instance, Shon and Abraham, who described themselves as Orthodox Jews, attributed their social difficulties at Retorno to differences in social and religious backgrounds:

I feel a huge gap between us. Many participants came from a lower social background; they didn't even complete elementary school. . . . It is difficult for me to communicate with them. (Shon)

I do not have many friends here, but I get along. . . . I think it's because of my different background. I am more interested in the religious world, and here I hear jokes about things that it's hard for me to hear. . . . In most respects we have no common language. (Abraham)

However, later Abraham admitted that he was able to connect to one of his group members at Retorno, and expressed the importance of social integration:

There is one person that I connected with here. . . . It's important to have someone to talk with, someone to share things with when you feel hurt. It's very important. (Abraham)

For some participants, especially those who were raised in rigid religious and often malfunctioning families, the theme of developing spiritual faith was not an easy task. It seems that their past negative experiences with spiritual matters still echoed and hindered the process of restoring their trust and faith, which remained ambivalent. For instance, Shai, whose mother died when he was young and whose father physically abused him, and who grew

up in an Orthodox Jewish home, described his reunion with God and religion as follows:

Today I love religion; today I have a connection with religion. Once I hated God and today I realize this hatred was also some kind of connection. Today it hurts me that I was not close to God, not speaking with God, that I did not feel enough spirituality. (Shai)

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to explore the application of positive criminology principles in the recovery process of addicted residents of Retorno, a Jewish TC. Based on reanalysis of the qualitative data that was extracted from in-depth interviews with adult residents who were about to complete their course of treatment, we defined three major themes that represent a three-dimensional (self, social, and spiritual), genuine integration process that the residents experienced. The most significant theme for our participants was their self-integration. During their active addiction period, they experienced a strong sense of inner chaos and alienation, and lack of a center of consciousness and norms (Timor, 2001), or congruency (Rogers, 1957). Positive criminology aspires to an increase in the sense of integration of self, and the findings also support this approach. The participants described a growing sense of coherence, an experience of well-being, and some achievement of emotional maturity.

The integration of self was supported by a parallel process of social integration, where participants experienced a growing connectedness to their recovering peers to create a social bond of recovery (Hirschi, 1969). In addition, the new abilities of an increasingly integrated self helped them improve their relationships with relatives outside Retorno, thereby further increasing their sense of social integration. Positive criminology stresses the experience of social alienation and sense of aloneness as an integral part of criminality and addiction (Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013). Accordingly, recovery is associated with receiving social support and establishing a social network of recovery (Best, 2012; Chen, 2006; White & Kurtz, 2005). Moreover, social integration is a two-way process of a growing ability to accept as well as provide support, and to become an integral part of a normative social network, a process that necessitates and simultaneously promotes the ability to reduce one's self-centeredness.

According to the 12-step ideology that was accepted in Retorno (Alcoholics Anonymous, 1976; Anonymous, 1991; Humphreys & Kaskutas, 1995; Kennedy & Humphreys, 1994; Narcotics Anonymous, 1988), self-centeredness is considered a prominent attribute of addiction. It is also considered a basic characteristic of most known behavioral disorders (Ronel, 2000), criminal conduct (Gibbs, 1991; Ronel, 2013), and emotional

disturbances (Elkind, 1967; Lukas, 1988). Naturally, a growing ability to reduce self-centeredness may correlate with the ability to accept and internalize prosocial messages, including compliance with the rules and boundaries of the TC and, later, of society. The ability to reduce self-centeredness may be associated with a sense of integration in both self and social dimensions. While more self-centered individuals experience greater powerlessness over external or internal demands (Elkind, 1967; Ronel, 2000), a decrease in self-centeredness and in the simultaneous experience of powerlessness is associated with an increase in a sense of self-integration, as the participants well described. In time, this may also support a process of spiritual integration, where the individual integrates with a spiritual meaning and power greater than oneself and spiritual values gradually replace the former norms of addiction and criminality.

Adams and Bezner (2000) argued that spirituality reflects connection to oneself, the environment, and a higher power. Several studies have indicated that spirituality plays a crucial role in increasing sense of coherence and meaning in life, and in reducing the intensity of negative emotions among addicts (Carroll, 1993; Chen, 2006). Retorno emphasizes the spiritual aspect of recovery, and some participants, regardless of their former religious background, described a sense of spiritual awakening in correspondence with a decrease in their former self-centeredness. Research has suggested that such change creates a new existential experience and opens up new human opportunities with strong clinical potential for clients (Ruthven, 1992).

Positive criminology, through positive experiences that include sense of belonging, accepting, and satisfaction of basic needs, targets self-centeredness as a domain of rehabilitation and recovery (Ronel, 2013), and the current findings support this assertion. In essence, positive criminology argues that positive experiences have a healing effect and their influence is strong and meaningful (Elisha, Idisis, & Ronel, 2013). Moreover, by enhancing positive experiences, one can help reduce the negative emotions that individuals experience and, subsequently, their negative behaviors and attitudes (Gredecki & Turner, 2009; Wylie & Griffin, 2012). Furthermore, positive experiences may transform the negative self-narrative into a positive, or at least a normative one (Maruna, 1997, 2004). Thus, narrative theorists have argued that identity formation is a long process in which individuals continuously restructure in light of new and positive experiences (McAdams, 1985). A positive change in narrative identity can enable individuals to reorganize their past information into new insights and a different perspective and is a key to the recovery process (Biernacki, 1986). Nevertheless, the described process is not linear, and the participants described personal difficulties during their struggles for recovery. The integration described was a result of growing through those difficulties.

As described earlier, the holistic approach of TCs, similar to the holistic perspective of positive criminology, helps meet the different challenges of addictions and offers clients a medium for transformation by positive

experiences that produce growing integration in three dimensions (McDonald & Leukefeld, 2005). De Leon (2010) described the qualities of the TC as a recovery agent. The significance of the current study is the identification of a broader attribute of the TC—it may serve as a positive criminology agent of integration. Although this was an exploratory study and requires further validation, the findings do present a possible direction for development of the TC model to consciously include positive criminology as a leading perspective in planning and to apply components that represent positive criminology. As the current study revealed, this is already carried out to some extent, but without conscious intention.

Recovery is an important aspect of positive criminology; however, additional processes, such as restorative justice of clients with their relatives or with victims of their past abusive behavior, can be incorporated into the TC model as well (Ronel & Segev, 2013). Restorative justice reflects positive criminology by emphasizing the social inclusion of offenders and victims, and bringing the offender, victim, and community together (Gray, 2005). Our results showed some hints of this direction, but further development is required. Another aspect of positive criminology is forgiveness (Hart & Shapiro, 2002), which our participants connected to their struggle for integration. Still another aspect is spiritual transformation and integration, and the current results indicate its significance for recovering clients, regardless of the spiritual school itself, be it 12-steps, Jewish, or others (Himmelstein, 2011; Kass & Lenox, 2005; Ronel, Frid, & Timor, 2013).

To sum up, the current results indicate the positive impact on the recovery of clients when broadening the scope of the TC by including several aspects that share the perspective of positive criminology. Concurrently, the broadening process of TC can take another route, that is, reaching out to a wider population in need. Like other TCs, Retorno opens its gate to clients with a criminal background, sometimes as an alternative to the criminal justice procedure (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011). Ronel & Inbar (2013) described a single-case follow-up study of a recovering juvenile addicted offender who underwent an intensive two-year recovery program at another TC in Israel. Ten years later he maintained the recovery, was well-integrated into normative society, worked with at-risk youth, and still abused illegal (albeit soft) drugs. Therefore, his recovery can be considered as partial, requiring further progress. In this study, the TC positive criminology model proved itself to be better for those who had engaged in criminal behavior than substance abusers. It might be that the TC model, when properly adapted based on positive criminology principles (Ronel & Segev, 2013), could serve wider populations that exhibit different scopes of social and individual disorders. This conclusion, although promising, still requires the support of future study.

The current study had inevitable limitations. First, we reanalyzed data of a previous, broader study (Ronel, Chen, Timor, & Elisha, 2011), and focused on “success cases” of those clients who were about to complete their course

of treatment. Nevertheless, the findings did explore an existing possibility. Second, we have not yet collected data concerning outcomes after successful program completion, which might be a source for future study. Third, based on its methodology, the ability to generalize from the findings is limited. The reader will need to exercise caution when deciding about generalization of the findings and conclusions.

In conclusion, these research findings contribute to the desistance literature in criminology that calls for strong and meaningful relationships throughout the process of recovery (Kazemian & Maruna, 2010; Maruna & LeBel, 2010; McNeill, 2006), while demonstrating their importance in early desistance in order to initiate a self-narrative change (King, 2013). In addition, the findings support the arguments of researchers and clinicians for incorporating positive elements in therapy to increase its efficiency (e.g., Moulden & Marshall, 2005; Wormith et al., 2007). The findings describe a process of recovery with a growing ability to decrease self-centeredness. This growing ability supports and is simultaneously enhanced by a three-dimensional experience of integration. Positive experiences enable such a process if they emphasize the necessity and direction of recovery. A TC framework that follows a holistic approach (McDonald & Leukefeld, 2005) and also includes a spiritual orientation may provide a positive criminology platform for personal change in this process of recovery. The primary therapeutic agent in a TC is the community itself (De Leon, 2000, 2010). Along with this therapeutic method, a TC could be organized according to positive criminology principles, including positive experiences, and thus provide its residents with a holistic process of recovery. Retorno is an example of such a TC. Future research might explore the role of other models of the TC method in presenting a positive criminology perspective, as well as exploring other components of this perspective and their relative contribution to the recovery process.

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