Respect: A Necessary Element of Justice Contact with Emerging Adults

Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community

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Jamie J. Fader and Dijonée Talley,
Temple University Department of Criminal Justice

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 | Introduction

02 | What is respect? Why is it so important to emerging adults?

05 | Respect in the justice system

12 | How can bidirectional respect be integrated into points of contact with justice-involved emerging adults?

14 | Potential Pitfalls

18 | Conclusion

20 | Endnotes & References

24 | About the Authors & Acknowledgements

25 | Members of the Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community

Respect has a powerful ripple effect on those around us. When we give respect, we often get respect in return. When we respect students, they feel empowered, valued, and needed. When students feel respected, they are more likely to demonstrate respect for themselves and others.
-- Holloman & Yates, 2012, p. 125

Introduction

The importance of offering respect to emerging adults in the course of service provision is common sense to many professionals who work with this population, but is a glaring gap in the discussion of best practices in the context of the justice system. Here, young people are often the targets of intentional or unconscious forms of disrespect in their interactions with police officers, agents of the court, and correctional or treatment staff. Research in other fields, including education, social welfare, and counseling psychology demonstrates the critical role of respect in producing positive outcomes, including academic achievement, treatment compliance, and retention. By contrast, young people report disengagement, cynicism, and retreat when they perceive a lack of respect—or worse, disrespect—by adults. Although little has been written that specifically addresses the role of respect for emerging adults (age 18-25), we can integrate what is known about school-aged youth with the science of emerging adulthood as a distinct developmental stage to appreciate the importance of explicitly incorporating respect into justice system contact with this group.

This policy brief brings together what is known about respect as a necessary element of justice contact for emerging adults. We examine the developmental role of respect in supporting healthy transitions to adulthood, the ways in which typical justice system operations undermine positive outcomes by building disrespect into the process, and highlight some innovative justice programs that are respect-centered. We conclude with suggestions for specific techniques for building respect into justice-related contacts with emerging adults. ***We believe that respect can be incorporated into any intervention or interaction to improve outcomes and support healthy transitions to adulthood.*** Honoring the human dignity of justice-involved emerging adults involves reframing their relationships with justice professionals working in all capacities.

What is respect? Why is it so important to emerging adults?

There is no single, universally agreed upon definition of respect. In part, this is because what constitutes respect can be culturally and age-specific (Sander et al., 2011). Miscommunication often occurs when the two groups employ differing definitions, as young people tend to expect bidirectional respect—or mutual acceptance and acknowledgement—and older adults are more likely to employ hierarchical respect, or deference to authority (Deutsch & Jones, 2008). Agents of the justice system may be especially likely to demand visible signs of deference, which can instigate conflict with youth, who—regardless of the outcome—want a process that upholds their dignity as human beings. As we will see, positive youth outcomes flow out of the reciprocal way of practicing respect, but the mainstream justice system tends to employ the hierarchical model.

For the purposes of the following discussion, we define respect as visible regard for thoughts and feelings and an acknowledgement that someone's life has intrinsic value. Respect is rooted in the principles of human dignity—self-control, autonomy, and rationality—which are fundamental needs for all healthy individuals and the legal basis for our world's healthiest societies (Ploch, 2012; Vera Institute of Justice, 2018). For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international human rights treaty governing the treatment of children in member countries, states: "Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 37 section C). It should be noted that every member country of the United Nations has ratified this document except the United States, where the dignity of children goes unprotected today.

Respect may be even more important during emerging adulthood, a period in which identity exploration takes on a more serious nature and young people work to determine who they will be as adults, how they will relate to others, and how they will fit into the world (Arnett, 2002; Erikson, 1950). As children and adolescents, they may have interacted with adults who viewed respect as currency to be earned rather than freely offered. Visible signs of respect tell emerging adults that they are viewed as equals by other adults. Respect, then, is an important component of the transition to adulthood, facilitating the achievement of the primary psychosocial developmental tasks for this stage of life. These tasks include: developing mastery and competence needed to become productive citizens; interacting with others appropriately, establishing satisfying intimate relationships,

engaging collaboratively within groups and participating in one's own communities; and building a positive sense of self and ability to govern oneself without being supervised (Steinberg, Young, & Little, 2004).

Respect, and related concepts such as rapport, belonging and empathy, have been shown to predict a range of positive outcomes for clients and students. Much of this research has been done in school or afterschool settings. For example, several educational studies examine students' sense of belonging, of being "accepted, valued, encouraged, and included" in schools and classrooms (Booker, 2007). This body of research finds that belonging is associated with improved academic performance, more satisfying student-teacher interactions, and better relationships with peers. On the other hand, alienation or "not fitting in" leads to higher incidence of behavioral or disciplinary problems in class and mental health problems such as anxiety and depression in students. School climate factors, such as regular communication and good relationships between teachers and students, can reduce negative outcomes such as bullying (Payne & Gottfredson, 2004).

The educational literature also points to respect as one of three elements of social justice (the others being access to resources and fairness), which promote psychological well-being and academic success. One study of youth, parents, and probation officers found that respect was achieved by listening to youth, treating youth as individuals, and believing in the ability of system-involved youth to change (i.e., not applying stigmatic labels). Small signals of respect such as consistently showing up on time for appointments or knocking before entering a room were visible indicators that youth were respected by adults (Sander et al., 2011).

Youth-centered research also suggests that bidirectional respect enhances adults' abilities to enforce rules. Adult authority rests in part on acknowledgement and buy-in of the legitimacy of that authority by youth (Bingham, 2004). Young people report distinguishing between respect for the rules and respect for people, leading researchers to conclude that treating youth with respect actually enhances the capacity to exercise adult authority (Deutsch & Jones, 2008). The key relationship between respect and authority, according to youth, is

whether rules are enforced within the context of a supportive relationship or being exercised for their own sake (e.g., using a "because I said so" rationale). Offering respect (e.g., in the context of interactions between emerging adults and the police) can also enhance the legitimacy of the law itself which, in turn, promotes more law-abiding behavior and increased willingness to cooperate with law enforcement or other justice agents (National Research Council, 2013; Tyler, 2006; Tyler, Fagan & Geller, 2014). It is worth considering that "because I said so" is often a rationale that starts at the top of an organization and is simply repeated by line staff who may or may not agree with the rule; this suggests that authority exercised by supervisors or judges may also be enhanced by allowing practitioners more discretion or control over their work (Schiraldi, 2020).

Much of the extant research focuses on healthy outcomes stemming from positive interactions with adults, but the evidence also suggests that negative interactions may have more lasting effects and be especially salient for emerging adults, for whom acceptance is so critical. Negative impacts might include impaired ability to establish relatedness, hindrance of personal growth, and an inability to trust older adults or an unwillingness to seek support from important non-parental figures. One study examining relationships between youth and adult staff at out-of-school programs found that a lack of respect for young people was one of several practices that inhibited the development of rapport (Buehler et al., 2018).[1] A racially diverse sample of youth reported that adults who used disrespectful words or behavior, judgmental and stereotyping language, and faux intimacy (e.g., using nicknames without permission or acting overly familiar) signaled to youth that their contributions were not valued. The youth reported negative psychological consequences of these practices, including decreased self-esteem, lower motivation, and disconnection from adults. One participant said, "Respect is a two-way thing. It's kinda hard to reciprocate something that isn't there" (p. 12).

Many of the ideas undergirding the importance of respect for justice-involved emerging adults come from labeling theory, which posits that negative labels are attached to individuals as they come into contact with various agents of the justice system (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1951). They may be referred to by older adults as "trouble-makers," "oppositional," "disruptive," "criminal" or "delinquent," as they are processed through the system.[2] Moreover, youth of color often report that adults including teachers, social workers, probation officers, and police expect the worst from them and define typical adolescent behavior in terms of trouble (Rios, 2011). These lowered expectations and the stigmatic labels that accompany them often become self-fulfilling prophecies (see also Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Once a young person accepts a negative label by those in authority, it becomes incorporated into their own self-definition, the peer groups they seek out, and the behavior they exhibit in the future. In short, we can create the very negative behavior that we want to prevent by treating emerging adults as if they are criminals. Particularly where they perceive a lack of procedural justice (or fairness) in their treatment in the system, they may be likely to "double down" and prove justice agents right in their negative predictions (Sherman, 1993). On the other hand, separating the act from the person—as is done in restorative justice practices—reduces the negative impacts of labeling, while holding individuals accountable for their behavior (Sered, 2019).

Respect in the justice system

Respect—or disrespect—operates at two levels: systemic/institutional and individual/interpersonal. We believe that individual or interpersonal signs of respect such as hand shaking and eye contact are meaningful but have limited long-term impact if they are offered in a larger systemic or institutional framework that is inherently disrespectful and dehumanizing. When supported or demanded by agency leaders, respect as an organizational value can be better reflected and transmitted through individual agents (e.g., police, attorneys, judges, probation officers, treatment professionals). Other dehumanizing systems such as the educational system and the social welfare system are implicated as well, and although they are beyond the scope of this brief, often intersect with the justice system in damaging ways, such as the criminalization of school students.

The remainder of this brief examines the typical ways that justice practices communicate a lack of respect for those in conflict with the law, as well as systemic and interpersonal practices that are respect-centered.

TYPICAL JUSTICE PRACTICES: DEFERENCE TO AUTHORITY

Although it is common practice for justice system agents to demand deference and respectful demeanor and language from emerging adults in conflict with the law, literature on best practices is generally silent on the benefits of offering respect in return (referred to above as "bidirectional respect"). In fact, typical practices of the American justice system can fairly be described as a series of degrading experiences meant to disempower all who come in contact with it. This begins at the initial encounter with police and extends through every stage of the process.

Youth of color who are stopped, questioned, and frisked by police often report physical and verbal forms of disrespect (Brunson & Miller, 2006). Young people in a recent study in San Francisco reported witnessing or experiencing a wide variety of excessive use of force, including throwing, grabbing, choking, or slamming individuals, as well as use of abusive language such as threats or cursing (Novich & Hunt, 2017). In the context of "proactive" policing, officers and young people in poor communities come together so frequently that police stops have become part of the "regular routine" for adolescent boys,

who learn that being physically handled by authorities is so normal that they often assist officers in their own pat-downs (Jones, 2014). Disrespectful treatment at the hands of the police leads to an erosion of trust in law enforcement, including willingness to report crime, and belief in the legitimacy of the law more generally (Carr, Napolitano, & Keating, 2006; Tyler, 2006). On the other hand, interactions where officers treat young people with dignity – offering small but meaningful gestures such as handshakes – result in positive assessments of police effectiveness and fairness (Novich & Hunt, 2017).

the degradation rituals that are a typical part of court or probation procedures can be eliminated in smaller, community-based reporting or justice centers

Moving from arrest to court processing, other common practices send messages to justice-involved emerging adults that they are not worthy of respect. Court visitors routinely wait in long lines to endure demeaning security procedures: removing belts and jewelry, having purses and bags scanned or searched, and being "wanded down" by security guards (often while they watch a stream of mostly white court professionals entering without such scrutiny). Long delays and wasted time spent in court waiting rooms reveal an underlying lack of value attributed to visitors' time. Overburdened public defenders are afforded little time to consult with their clients before a hearing and defendants are often discouraged from speaking on their own behalf as it is determined that doing so could hurt their cases. Judges' decisions can appear capricious, use language that defendants do not understand, and, particularly in Family Court, often come with well-meaning but nevertheless shame-inducing public admonishments about the consequences of poor future decision making (Humes, 1996). It should be noted that many of the security procedures inside courts are simply practical attempts to protect those inside government buildings. Nevertheless, court workers at every point of contact may find that infusing respect into interactions is likely to result in receiving respectful treatment in return. For example, Philadelphia's

court system has a clerk who is well known for injecting humor into the jury duty process, making an otherwise dreary day less so. Alternately, the degradation rituals that are a typical part of court or probation procedures can be eliminated in smaller, community-based reporting or justice centers, such as the NeON Centers described later in this brief.

In correctional and treatment settings, demands for respect toward adult staff are often inscribed into interventions themselves, drawing upon visible signs of obedience (i.e., moving about the facility in the prescribed manner, saying "thank you" when being corrected by staff) as markers of treatment progress toward earned release (Fader, 2013). Staff members at "Mountain Ridge Academy," a well-used and highly respected residential placement in Western Pennsylvania, regularly tested young people's mettle by "intervening" with them in close quarters, shouting in their faces as they dared the youth to respond.[3] These lessons teach young people how to swallow rage and lead them to question the legitimacy of programs and staff. A common refrain in many studies of youth in reform schools is "fake it to make it," learning how to say the things that are expected in a treatment setting, while privately disregarding even the most positive lessons (Sankofa et al., 2018).

The most degrading and inhumane treatment in the justice system is found in detention centers, jails, and prisons, where young people are especially prone to victimization by older residents and staff (Parent, et al., 1994). The sorting mechanisms leading to confinement result in a disproportionate number of vulnerable youth, including young persons of color, LGBTQIA youth, and those with physical or intellectual disabilities, serious mental health problems, and trauma histories (Quinn, et al., 2005). The conditions of confinement, including the use of isolation, unsanitary conditions, and abuse by staff or guards further exacerbates these vulnerabilities (Abram, et al., 2004). High rates of recidivism and a variety of collateral consequences (e.g., the effects of incarceration on employability) indicate that use of confinement as a sanction for law breaking is ineffective at best and at worst, counterproductive (Sered, 2019; Western, Travis, & Redburn, 2014).

INNOVATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES: RESPECT-CENTERED APPROACHES

Despite the lack of respect conveyed in traditional justice approaches reviewed above, a number of innovative justice practices place respect at the center of their interactions with the public and their clients. This section is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of respect-based approaches, but to give the reader an idea of the variety of justice settings in which they have been carried out. These strategies can promote positive relationship building and serve as a model of behavioral exchange that allows emerging adults to achieve a balance of autonomy and respect when interacting with authority figures in a justice setting.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) have transformed the way its members interact with indigenous peoples on the Mi'kmaq Reserve in New Brunswick. Members of the police force work in close collaboration with members of the First Nation of Elsipogtog to appreciate and incorporate cultural differences into their daily policing practices. After learning that wearing their police hats was a sign of disrespect and intimidation to band members, police regularly began removing them while on the reserve. Officers who are fluent in Mi'kmaq begin in that language when interacting with citizens they believe might be indigenous. Members of the RCMP also participate in sentencing circles in the community, and report that the degree of trust between police and residents has improved (RCMP, 2019).

Another approach that is grounded in mutual respect is the credible messenger movement

Another approach that is grounded in mutual respect is the credible messenger movement, which employs mentors who are either impacted by the system themselves or otherwise drawn from the same communities as the targets of intervention (see also "peer navigators," a similar model discussed by the Justice Policy Institute, 2016). Sharing common experiences and a common language, these mentors serve as role models and provide guidance to justice-involved youth (Credible Messenger Justice Center, 2019). Unlike the staff inside many detention and correctional facilities, who are most likely to be drawn from the rural communities where these facilities are often sited, credible messengers are likely to avoid "othering" or making negative judgments about past behavior. Examples of successful

credible messenger models include CURE Violence, where community members serve as violence interrupters to reduce the incidence of gun violence (Butts et al., 2015) and ARCHES transformative mentoring program, targeted at young adult (16-24) probation clients in New York City (Lynch, et al., 2018). Promising credible messenger programs specifically designed with emerging adults in mind include specialized correctional units in Connecticut (Crowley, 2017) and in the Washington, D.C. jail (Castón & Woody, 2019).

Motivational interviewing is another respect-oriented practice that has taken root in a number of justice agencies, particularly those administering probation and parole (Miller & Rollnick, 2012). Motivational interviewers are trained to support clients in embracing the need to change their offending or substance abuse behavior and promoting the steps required to achieve it. Important to the idea of respect, a central tenet of motivational interviewing is reflecting, not challenging, clients' perceptions (Bundy, 2004). Motivational interviewers are encouraged to: express empathy, avoid argument, support self-efficacy, roll with resistance, and develop discrepancy between the current and the ideal situations. The "spirit" of motivational interviewing involves practitioners embracing a new frame for relating to their clients, including collaboration with the client, evoking the client's ideas about change, emphasizing the autonomy of the client, and practicing compassion in the process (Miller & Rollnick, 2013; University of Oregon). Spohr et al.'s (2016) study of implementation of motivational interviewing in a community corrections agency found that empathy and "spirit" were significant predictors of treatment initiation among clients with substance use disorders.

Trauma-informed courts are an innovative and respect-oriented approach to the unique needs of emerging adults. To be trauma-informed, court practitioners and policies must acknowledge the histories of violence and other forms of trauma that clients bring into their interactions with the court, as well as the ways in which the justice process can cause stress and exacerbate pre-existing trauma (Carter, 2017). According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, judges planning to create this kind of environment should: (1) ask trauma-informed questions to identify children who need or could benefit from trauma-informed services; (2) have complete information from all the systems that are working with the child and family; (3) sufficiently consider trauma when deciding where the child is going to live and with whom; and (4) if there isn't enough information in court, have a trauma assessment done by a trauma-informed professional (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2013). Trauma-informed courts and the tenets of procedural justice,

discussed below, are complementary approaches for improving court services.

Emerging adults can also be particularly responsive to restorative justice, another respect-centered practice. Restorative justice is rooted in the notion that it is important to acknowledge the seriousness of harm done to a victim by holding individuals accountable for the harm that they may have caused, but to do so in a manner that honors and reinforces the humanity of both parties involved (Sered, 2019). This is a central tenet of the nationally recognized Common Justice model, which offers an alternative to incarceration for "responsible parties," (most of whom are emerging adults who have committed violent crimes). Wrongdoers engage in a labor of transformation, or

Emerging adults can also be particularly responsive to restorative justice, another respect-centered practice.

"doing sorry," in an environment that holds them accountable but provides a supportive network structure for change. In this way, they are able to take responsibility for the harm, but also reclaim respect, dignity, self-worth, connectedness, and hope—elements that are regarded as central to the rehabilitation process as they are protective factors against committing future offenses. Importantly, this process of reconciliation appreciates the critical role respect can play in helping to address harm and fostering change for both individuals and their larger communities. While survivor-centered, this restorative justice strategy recognizes the ripples of harm that are caused by a punitive and criminogenic justice system. There, disrespect effectively functions as a shame-inducing exercise of power—shame that triggers anger, cynicism, and trauma, and therefore maintains the same antecedents practitioners work to diminish among justice-involved individuals (Braithwaite, 1989). Conversely, restorative justice seeks to foster and harness the long-term healing power of humanity, empathy, and relatedness—"enemies" of the shame caused by stigma and disrespect.

A final example of an approach that is infused with respect is Positive Youth Justice, an expansion of what was previously known as Positive Youth Development, which builds on the strengths and assets that young people possess, rather than focusing on their deficits or risk factors (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010; Laub, Doherty, & Sampson,

Positive Youth Justice is a framework that moves away from traditional models that view system-involved youth as either victims or villains and toward a vision of youth as potential resources for their families and communities

2007). This model begins with two key assets that need to be developed to support healthy transitions to adulthood: learning/doing and attaching/belonging. Nurturing the learning/doing asset involves developing new skills and competencies, actively using new skills, taking on new roles and responsibilities, and developing self-efficacy and personal confidence. Developing the attaching/belonging asset includes helping the youth become a member of prosocial groups, developing and enjoying the sense of belonging, and valuing service to others and the larger community. These assets should be developed across a variety of life dimensions, including: work, education, relationships, community, health and creativity. Instead of being an "off the shelf" program, Positive Youth Justice is a framework that moves away from traditional models that view system-involved youth as either victims or villains and toward a vision of youth as potential resources for their families and communities. As with all respect-centered models, language matters. For example, in 2019, California legislators approved a change to all education laws, replacing the term "at risk" with "at promise." This, reformers have argued, reframes students in terms of their assets to be developed rather than their deficits to be minimized or eradicated.

How can bidirectional respect be integrated into points of contact with justice-involved emerging adults?

For justice-involved emerging adults, practices that support bidirectional respect can be implemented to improve the experience of points of contact in important ways. For the most part, these suggestions operate at the individual or interpersonal level, rather than at the systemic level.

#1: FRAME RESPECT AS GIVEN, NOT EARNED.

Approaches that honor human dignity assume that respect is a right that is unconditionally offered, and does not need to be earned. One way for practitioners to signal this philosophy is to offer visible displays of autonomy and trust in young people, such as leaving them unsupervised to complete a task. Another example is to acknowledge privacy, such as knocking before entering a room. These examples are targeted toward personal interactions, but larger organizational policies can serve as regular reminders about the critical role of respect. To illustrate, the New York City Family Court has given respect a central place in its organizational vision ("respect for each and every jurist and non-judicial court worker who serves in our busy courts"), core values ("respect for all persons with whom we interact"), and primary objectives ("promoting respect for all, litigant and court staff alike") (NYC Family Court). These reminders are posted where they are visible to all workers and visitors to the court.

#2: AVOID UNINTENTIONAL SIGNS OF DISRESPECT

As noted above, emerging adults may be especially attuned to disrespect, namely verbal and non-verbal slights by agents of the justice system or program staff. Sometimes the very techniques that adults use to build rapport can be interpreted by youth as disrespectful. Examples from one study of youth receiving afterschool services include: inappropriate humor, overfamiliarity (such as giving youth nicknames), and profanity (Buehler et al., 2018). Judicious use of physical touch (e.g., placing one's arm around a student or client) acknowledges the embodied disrespect present in the justice system, such as pat-downs, searches (especially strip searches), and restraints, and the history of these types of treatment that individuals may bring into their interactions with the justice system. Microaggressions, including application of stereotypes to members of marginalized groups, are subtle but clear signals of perceived inferiority. These are often unintentional and sometimes posed as compliments, for example, about being articulate or "well-spoken." They might also come in the form of public "dress codes" inside courthouses or probation offices, prohibiting white tank tops or sagging pants.

#3: WORK AS PARTNERS, ENCOURAGING OWNERSHIP OF SOLUTIONS

The youth engagement framework, which has been shown to improve trust between youths and adults and increase youth participation, involves young people in designing their own programming (Zeldin, Christens, & Powers, 2013). This type of approach requires adults to embrace a non-hierarchical stance, sharing ownership of solutions with young people and trusting their competence to know their own needs. Owning shared solutions is also a key element of the NeON (Neighborhood Opportunity Network) program in New York City, which reorganized the delivery of probation services to young people so that they were offered in their communities and as part of a larger complement of supportive services (NYC Department of Probation, 2013). Transparency, or explaining the purpose of engagement in a particular activity, is another visible way of demonstrating respect.

#4: EMPLOY BEST PRACTICE LANGUAGE (BPL)

The BPL framework comes from the field of education and aims to help teachers set the terms for mutual respect in their classrooms by modeling respect for their students and working to understand that students are often asking for help when they are disrespectful toward teachers. Researchers have identified specific language that adults can model, including words of: accountability, encouragement, grace, guidance, high expectations, hope, love, respect, relationships, understanding, and unity (for specific examples, see Table 1 in Holloman & Yates, 2012). Elements of BPL are

well-suited to target certain signals of disrespect most relevant to justice-related environments, including unintentionally discouraging emerging adults or expressing low expectations for them, demanding unconditional authority or deference, and making assumptions based on practitioners' own perspectives (Holloman & Yates, 2012). In short, language is important because it sets the terms for the kind of relationship that practitioners want to build with young people. Seemingly small choices, such as how to address emerging adults and how they are asked to address justice agents (e.g., by first name, using titles), set the tone for bidirectional respect. Finally, it is not only what is said to emerging adults, but how they are listened to—by attending to them, withholding judgement, and encouraging collaborative dialogue—that conveys respect (Wilson, 1993).

#5: MAKE CONSCIOUS USE OF VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

The fields of clinical psychology and, more recently, investigative interviewing (sometimes known as interrogation), have outlined a number of techniques designed to improve rapport with clients, which is associated with improved client satisfaction, treatment compliance, and client outcomes (Leach, 2005). Maintaining eye contact, leaning slightly forward to convey engagement, head nodding, and avoiding 'closed' posture such as crossed arms are non-verbal methods of communicating respect by signaling interest in hearing what clients are saying (St.-Yves, 2006). Moving out from behind a desk and sitting next to young people during a conversation can suggest a leveling of the power dynamic inherent in adult-youth interactions. Shaking hands with clients has been shown to be an effective technique for probation officers using Motivational Interviewing (Clark, 2005). Verbal responses such as affirmations ("I understand," "I see," "mm-hm") are also known to improve rapport. This research suggests that the first interaction is a critical time to establish the terms of a rapport-based relationship. Other research in experimental psychology has shown that individuals vary in their interpretation of facial expressions, with neutral faces being interpreted negatively by emerging adults, whose brain functions are still developing, and by those with mood disorders (Young, et al., 2019). Practitioners may find that using what feels to them like exaggerated positive expressions such as smiling or providing other forms of verbal positive feedback can help overcome this bias.

Best Practice Language Framework*

INSTEAD OF	USE	TO	SO THAT STUDENTS
Permitting students to be irresponsible	*Words of Accountability*	Hold them accountable all along the way	Reach personal accountability
Unintentionally allowing students to become discouraged	*Words of Encouragement*	Rally students with the courage to overcome challenges, obstacles, barriers, failures, defeats, fears, apathy, etc.	Live a better way; to be all they can be
Harboring ill feelings like unforgiveness and blame	*Words of Grace*	Separate the student from the behavior, forgive their past mistakes, and give them another chance to get it right	Experience and practice the power of forgiveness and second chances
Hoping that students find their way	*Words of Guidance*	Help students find a path to success and appropriate behavior	Practice self-management
Unintentionally discouraging and limiting students with low expectations	*Words of High Expectations*	Help students envision and pursue their best	Achieve their full potential
Surviving for today	*Words of Hope*	Inspire a vision of a better tomorrow	Hope for and work for a better tomorrow
Speaking only to the minds of our students	*Words of Love*	Touch their hearts and demonstrate love and care unconditionally	Experience and practice the selfless power and purpose of putting others first
Focusing only on the course content	*Words of Relationship*	Establishing a caring and positive connection with each student	Develop positive lifelong relationships with others
Allowing a climate of disrespect in your classroom	*Words of Respect*	Demonstrate a mutual admiration for one another	Model respect for self and others
Making assumptions based upon your perspective	*Words of Understanding*	Discover the student's perspective	Experience and practice empathy for others
Saying "It's my way or the highway"	*Words of Unity*	Nurture a culture of collaboration and teamwork in your classroom	Practice transformational teamwork through collaboration, agreement, and cooperation

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#6: PROMOTE PROCEDURAL FAIRNESS

Law enforcement officers, court professionals, supervision agents, and program staff have substantial discretion in how they perform their duties. Given the critical role of perceived fairness to emerging adults, practitioners should incorporate the elements of procedural justice, which include: (1) treating individuals with respect and dignity; (2) making sure they understand the process and rationale for your actions; (3) giving emerging adults a voice in the process; and (4) making decisions neutrally and consistently (Tyler, 2007-08; see also Shedd, 2015). Research shows that procedural justice reinforces the legitimacy of the justice process and creates trust between practitioners and clients. When carried out consistently, emerging adults in the justice system are more likely to comply with court orders and supervision requirements, and are less likely to come into conflict with the law in the future. The Red Hook Community Justice Center in Brooklyn is a well-known example of a court program that focuses on procedural fairness, as well as treating its clients holistically and in their own community. The Center for Court Innovation offers training for courts that wish to be more intentional in their efforts to incorporate the elements of procedural justice; many resources are available on their website (Center for Court Innovation, 2020).

#7: INCORPORATE CULTURAL HUMILITY/ SENSITIVITY

As suggested above, the promise of the Credible Messenger movement involves its unique approach to hiring staff who have shared experiences with system-involved individuals—for example, having grown up in similar communities or having also been impacted by the justice system (Alcorn, 2019). Conversely, emerging adults respond negatively when programming is facilitated by individuals who are unfamiliar with the unique needs of the serviced community. This is often due to a lack of understanding or miscommunication between practitioners and clients. People of color constitute the majority of the justice-involved population, but are less visible among practitioners. As some research has suggested, the impact of disrespect can also be especially salient for emerging adults of color due to their socio-historical positioning in U.S. society. As some research has found, staff members inside rural treatment settings often use inappropriate or stigmatic judgments about the presentations of clients of color, associating Black or Latinx cultural expressions (e.g., slang, rap or hip-hop music) with criminality (Fader, 2013). Given the premium on respect in urban communities of color (Anderson, 1999) cultural humility training, which helps staff recognize and appreciate cultural differences, can help establish a safe environment for participants of color (Delgado et al., 2013; Outley & Witt, 2006).[4]

Similarly, gender-sensitive programming acknowledges the unique pathways that bring young women and men into contact with the law. For girls and young women, abuse such as sexual victimization is often the catalyzing event for behavior such as running away from home or even violence toward others, including their perpetrators (Flores, 2016). Because of the special emphasis placed on relationships by girls and women, forging respect-based connections with staff is particularly important (Batchelor & Burman, 2004). Although boys are likely to be compliant because they fear the consequences of rule-breaking, research suggests that girls engage in programs when they build respect with staff who are perceived to operate in their best interests (Ryan & Lindgren, 1999). "For many girls and young women who offend, their only other experience of relationships is subordination, exploitation and abuse. Interactions between young women and workers can provide a context for young female offenders to participate in positive relationships" (Batchelor & Burman, 2004, p. 14).

#8: LISTEN TO EMERGING ADULTS

As noted above, "giving voice" to emerging adults is a central tenet of procedural justice, which enhances trust in and legitimacy of the system. Yet, our systems rarely provide space for these voices. Interactions with police can escalate quickly if youth are perceived as "talking back." Court dockets are packed and hearings move quickly. Young people might be discouraged from speaking in court because it could potentially weaken their defense. The presumption of guilt is pervasive, and it is rare to give clients the opportunity to explain the circumstances leading to conflict with the law. Being heard and believed, however, is critical to building trust. Moreover, emerging adults are very often in the best positioned to know what they need. As agencies or programs consider making respect a more explicit focus of their contacts with emerging adults, these young people need a place at the table to help shape future practice.

Conclusion

To summarize, respect is a currency whose value cannot be underestimated or overlooked. Respect, often taken for granted as an ideal, should also be understood as a commodity or tool to foster human connection and understanding. This is especially the case for emerging adults, who continue to experience a range of developmental and social changes as they transition into adulthood. Retaining a sense of dignity is crucial to supporting the acquisition of building blocks to become healthy adults.

This brief has argued that the effectiveness of a wide variety of justice contacts with emerging adults can be enhanced by deliberately implementing respectful practices. We acknowledge that sharing power and authority is not easy and goes against the hierarchical model of constructing (i.e., expecting or demanding) respect from those we come into contact with in the course of justice practice. In writing this brief, we consulted emerging adults who are part of Echoes of Incarceration, a documentary filmmaking initiative by youth who are directly impacted by the criminal justice system. They commented:

There's so many ways that the assumption of hierarchical respect is baked into our society. It's also pretty baked in that a young person gets respect by earning it. Bidirectional, freely-given respect is not simple or obvious, and actually runs very counter to a lot of basic thinking. . . . Also, there's a difference between an initial interaction, in which [justice] stakeholders could freely

offer respect, and what happens next if a troubled, damaged, or generally acting-out young person shows disrespect in return. At that point, the adult can and ideally should continue to show respect, and that's technically free. But in reality, it's psychologically extremely difficult, requiring a lot of training, a lot of resources at that person's disposal.

Understanding that disrespect builds barriers and creates division between young people and practitioners, the justice system can strengthen the degree to which emerging adults are able to engage and benefit from any form of contact by strategically incorporating respect into everyday interactions. Connecting with emerging adults more effectively in this way enhances their experience with and commitment to law-abiding behavior. This not only makes their successful transition to adulthood more likely, but also addresses crime and public safety more effectively in the long-run. In this way, respect is transformative for everyone.

The current global health crisis and civil rights protests have provided a window of opportunity to reimagine the justice system from "square one" (Western, 2019). A number of leaders in the field have called for a complete overhaul of how we conceive of justice, with social inclusion as the key value orienting future planning, research, and practice (National Academies of Science, 2018). In addition to dismantling exclusionary practices such as fines and fees (Harris, 2016) and felony disenfranchisement (Manza & Uggen, 2008) that disproportionately affect impoverished communities of color, building a new system that affirms the basic human dignity of individuals can be an important step in achieving racial equity and improving public safety.

ENDNOTES

[1] The other problematic practices included unengaging communication styles, inappropriate behavior, contradictory expectations, and adult-driven approaches.

[2] The framers of the juvenile court in 1899 recognized that labeling could have negative effects, leading them to invent unique terminology that applies to juveniles. Youth are not found guilty but "adjudicated;" they are not sentenced but receive "dispositions;" they are not incarcerated but sent to "residential placements."

[3] "Mountain Ridge Academy" is a pseudonym used to protect the identities of the young people in this study.

[4] Some medical practitioners have argued for replacing the term 'cultural competence' (which implies a finite knowledge that can be mastered) with 'cultural humility,' which "incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, to redressing the power imbalances in the patient-physician dynamic, and to developing mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic clinical and advocacy partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations" (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 117).

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jamie J. Fader

Jamie J. Fader earned her Doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania and is an Associate Professor of criminal justice at Temple University. Her book, Falling Back: Incarceration and Transitions to Urban Youth (2013, Rutgers University Press) won the 2016 Michael J. Hindelang award for the book making the "most outstanding contribution to criminology."

Dijonée Talley

Dijonée Talley is a Doctoral student in criminal justice at Temple University and a gun violence prevention fellow with the Stoneleigh Foundation. She earned her M.S. in criminal justice with a concentration in forensic psychology from the University of New Haven.

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MEMBERS OF THE EMERGING ADULT JUSTICE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Bianca E. Bersani
Quincy L. Booth
Elizabeth Calvin
Paula M. Carey
Elizabeth Clarke
Joshua Dohan
Kevin Donahue
Jamie Fader
Laura Fine
Karen Friedman Agnifilo
Thomas Grisso
Francis V. Guzman
Lael Elizabeth Hiam Chester
Nikki Jones
Dana Kaplan
John H. Laub
Michael Lawlor
Edwina G. Richardson-Mendelson
Wayne Osgood
Marc Schindler
Vincent Schiraldi
Carla Shedd
Selen Siringil Perker
Maya Sussman
Steven Tompkins
Christopher Uggen
Katherine Weinstein Miller
Bruce Western

Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community

The Emerging Adult Justice Learning Community is a carefully organized collaborative learning environment that brings together researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and advocates twice a year over a three-year period in order to create more developmentally appropriate, effective and fairer criminal justice responses for youths ages 18 – 25. Participants of the Learning Community are all engaged in some aspect of this work in their professional pursuits.

Despite the fact that emerging adults experience some of the worst criminal justice outcomes in our justice system, little attention has been paid to the research that would support new and improved justice system responses. The Learning Community's goals are to provide researchers and policymakers access to one another in order to increase learning, practice and policy innovations by translating academic research into effective policies and developing opportunities to research burgeoning practices that contribute to a more equitable treatment of this population.