Volunteers in Corrections: Profiles and Training Needs

Singapore After-Care Association

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Abstract

There is a long history of volunteer involvement in the correctional sector. Other than bringing about personal growth for the volunteers, their contributions also benefit the returning offenders and their families, correctional agencies, as well as the whole sector. There is no doubt that they play important roles in the reintegration of offenders. However, little is known about the makeup of this group, their needs, and the reasons which motivate them to continue volunteering in the sector. To bridge the gap, this study examined the profiles, training needs, and motivations of volunteers in the sector. The findings from this study can be used as a consideration of various components to bring about more effective volunteer programmes, targeting recruitment, selection, training, and recognition.

Introduction

The involvement of volunteers in the correctional process can be dated back to as early as the 18th century. Over time, volunteers are increasingly seen as a valuable asset to the correctional sector. Often, prison programmes targeted at offenders strive to ease their re-entry and reintegration into the community. Playing important roles in this process are greater community understanding and involvement (Celinska, 2000). Literature has also emphasised the importance of volunteer involvement for smoother re-entry of ex-offenders into the community (e.g. Celinska, 2000; Adams, Smith, & Wiseman, 1970).

Volunteer involvement offers a number of contributions to the correctional process. Firstly, they bring about an impact to the inmate's readjustment process. Research has highlighted how some rehabilitative programmes in prison may fail to serve their purpose partly due to their inapplicability on the readjustment process after release from prison (Celinska, 2000). One possible solution brought to light to overcome this problem is to involve more community volunteers in the process. These volunteers can help to reduce the stigma of imprisonment suffered by inmates. According to the study by Clinks (2016), inmates viewed volunteers from the community as someone who wanted to help with their rehabilitation efforts, and became more motivated to engage in the services available. For the inmates, it was also beneficial to experience some form of humanity, and showed them that there were people supporting them from outside of prison (Clinks, 2016). This also helped to increase their sense of self-worth and hope.

Volunteers also benefit prisons and organisations to which they are attached as they significantly add on to the manpower available to the sector. In the United States, overpopulation and rising cost of incarceration had resulted in an accelerated release of inmates back to the community on programmes (Celinska, 2000). Similarly in Singapore, rehabilitation efforts extend from in-care programmes to aftercare support for ex-offenders. Increased emphasis by the Singapore Prison Service (SPS) on aftercare support in recent years has also seen more offenders being placed on community-based programmes upon release to help with their rehabilitation and re-entry into society. In 2018, over 2,000 inmates were placed on community-based programmes (SPS, 2019). With more inmates being placed on programmes, this results in a need for more manpower in the sector to meet the demand of running such programmes. With the number of clients far outnumbering workers, volunteers become an important asset to the sector.

The availability of volunteers allows organisations the capability to run various types of programmes or to deliver certain services to the inmates or families of the inmates. Some of these volunteers may belong to a religious group and offer religious teachings to the inmates (Tewksbury & Collins, 2005). Apart from religious purposes, there are also volunteers recruited for more secular purposes. Some of which may include parenting, education, mentoring, or befriending programmes. In a study, volunteer managers shared that engaging volunteers in such programmes could bring about a more personal touch to support the inmates in a way that was different from what was offered by an employed staff (Clinks, 2016). Especially for the befriending programme in Singapore, volunteers are specifically

recruited to fill in the manpower required for the delivery of these services. While employed staff assists them as and when needed, volunteers are the ones mainly involved in building up a personal relationship with the inmates, and supporting them in their reintegration journey.

Another potential area of contribution by volunteers is their ability to raise public awareness and gain acceptance for ex-offenders in the community (Adams et al., 1970). Even though community attitudes towards ex-offenders was not a topic being explored, Clinks (2016) found that more than half of their respondents had identified a major impact of volunteering on their personal attitudes. Respondents had learnt that their lives and experiences were very different from that of the inmates, and may also speak positively to their network of friends on the rehabilitation efforts in prison. This could potentially help to break down stigma faced by ex-offenders.

Although the use of volunteers may be potentially beneficial, it could also raise a number of issues (Tewksbury & Dabney, 2004). Firstly, there is a need to identify the areas of work best suited for volunteers. Organizations have to identify the responsibilities and develop training regimes best suited for the volunteers. Secondly, there is a need to ensure a sufficient number of qualified and willing volunteers that can be relied on. Lastly, organizations have to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these volunteer activities. These issues point to the importance of having proper selection and training practices in place prior to volunteers embarking on their duties. A proper volunteer selection process can strengthen the programmes they run, which in turn will benefit the volunteers, their clients, the organisation, as well as the community as a whole. Some fundamental components include holding interviews, providing information on the organisation's expectations, and finding out what the potential volunteer wants to achieve (Stalder, 1999). Following that, volunteers should participate in structured orientation training. Stalder (1999) suggested that the orientation training should cover at least these few topics: mission and goals of criminal justice system and of the organisation, area(s) in which services would be provided, security procedures, safety and emergency procedures, and cultural diversity. These topics are commonly covered by organisations running volunteer programmes in the correctional sector (e.g. Maine Department of Corrections, 2013; Mississippi Department of Corrections, 2019). The Department for Correctional Services in South Australia (2019) also pointed out the need to develop the skills of volunteers in specific areas that they work in. As such, any further training provided should depend on the role of volunteers.

In Singapore, a training initiative was formally launched by SPS in 2010 to assist volunteers who are actively providing their services to support the inmates in their reintegration. As the agency appointed by SPS, Singapore After-Care Association (SACA) plays an active role in the coordination and facilitation of training for volunteers in this sector. The training opportunities provided not only aim to enhance the skills and competencies of volunteers, but also formalise the upgrading of their qualifications. At the start, the courses provided were structured into three levels – basic, intermediate, and advanced. It was compulsory for all volunteers to undergo the basic training modules in order to volunteer within prison institutions. Similar to the common introductory topics mentioned earlier, the basic training modules included: (1) prison orientation, and security and safety awareness, (2)

ethics, and (3) dealing with inmates. Intermediate modules were gradually added to the list based on the needs identified by the respective agencies as necessary for volunteers to perform their role. Advanced modules focused on in-depth knowledge which was beneficial although not fundamental for performing their role. As training evolved from only providing basic training for volunteers to developmental skills-based training, and subsequently to the professionals in the sector, there was a need for a better structured training programme. Hence, the Development Framework for Offender Rehabilitation Personnel (DORP) was launched by SPS in 2014, with the aim of enhancing service delivery for volunteers and professionals; having separate tracks created for each group. While a new training track was developed for professionals in the sector, the training structure for volunteers remained the same with the three levels mentioned earlier.

The intermediate and advanced training modules provided currently are based on six major areas identified as relevant for volunteers in the correctional sector;

(1) Knowledge on Correction,
(2) Befriending Skills,
(3) Anger and Addiction,
(4) Self-care,
(5) General Skills, and
(6) Individual and Family Work.

Knowledge on Correction

The majority of volunteers in the correctional sector are members of the community, and often do not have prior experience or knowledge about the criminal justice system and working with (ex)-offenders (e.g. Crawford, 2004; Kort-Butler & Malone, 2015; Souza & Dhami, 2008). As such, Knowledge on Correction aims to provide volunteers with information about the criminal justice system in Singapore, as well as theoretical knowledge or skills that may help them understand and work more effectively with the offending population.

Befriending Skills

Literature has shown the benefits of offenders strengthening their social ties to the community as this increases the likelihood of successful re-entry (McDaniel, 2014). Prosocial support from the community may include family, friends, spouse, or surrogate support such as a mentor or befriender. The Befriending programme is a key service provided by a number of agencies in the correctional sector in Singapore, and volunteers who are part of these programmes play an important role to prepare offenders for their re-entry. Therefore, training on befriending skills such as attending skills and issues on boundaries provide befrienders with the fundamental knowledge about their role and responsibilities.

Anger and Addiction

Both anger and addiction problems are key issues in the prison population. Based on the statistics by SPS (2012; 2019), individuals who were incarcerated due to substance abuse made up over 60% of the prison population in 2009, with an increase to over 70% in 2018. Research has shown that inmates with addiction issues tend to have more anger control problems (Brochu & Guyon, 2011). Hence, providing training on anger and addiction issues is important as volunteers are very likely to encounter inmates who face these.

Self-care

Much like counsellors and social workers, volunteers in the correctional sector often experience inmates recounting personal trauma. Empathetic involvement in trauma-based work may potentially cause a shift in the helper's worldview, which can impact their sense of self, others, or the world in these areas: safety, dependency or trust, power, esteem, and intimacy (Jacobi & Roberts, 2016). The importance of maintaining mental boundaries between their own lives and the narratives of clients was highlighted as a factor to prevent vicarious traumatisation, as well as burnout (Jacobi & Roberts, 2016). One of the significant factors contributing to burnout is stress (Jansen, 2010). Past research also reported different job stressors between volunteer counsellors and professional counsellors. While volunteer counsellors reported feeling of loneliness and lack of feedback from clients as their job stressors, professional counsellors reported poor confidence in their ability, problems with colleagues and supervisors, and being in a supervisory role as their stressors (Jansen, 2010). Hence, self-care is a necessary component to prevent burnout among volunteers. Training on self-care provides volunteers with knowledge regarding preventing and addressing compassion fatigue and setting boundaries with the inmates.

General Skills

Volunteers are often considered helpers who use people helping skills as part of their work (Nelson-Jones, 2013), and they may possess different levels of training on such skills. Training on general skills focuses on two areas. Firstly, it targets the volunteers in terms of developing their facilitation skills, and being an assertive volunteer. The other area is to help them develop effective people helping skills, such as the appreciation and sensitivity to cultural diversity, as well as understanding of personality, and responding to emotions. While it may not be sector-specific, training in general skills helps to shape the interactions and relationships between volunteers and their clients, and allows them to be a more effective helper.

Individual and Family Work

Volunteers encounter different types of inmates during their service, and may require different techniques to work with them. Hence, training in this area covers topics such as working with difficult clients, or inmates with mental health issues. Volunteers may also receive training on certain counselling techniques commonly used with the offending population, including basic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Motivational Interviewing.

The incarceration and re-entry of an individual also has an impact on their families. Firstly, families may act as a form of informal social support for the returning offenders. Research has shown the potential benefits for incarcerated individuals to maintain ties with their families, as they provide emotional support, and may act as a crucial link to the outside world (Christian, Mellow, & Thomas, 2006). It was also found that inmates who maintained strong ties to their family had higher rates of post-release success, compared to inmates who did not maintain such ties (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). Even though families may be supportive of the returning offender, they also experience significant hardships such as financial strain and increased anxiety (Naser & Visher, 2006). On the other hand, a collateral consequence of incarceration is family separation, which has an irreversible and detrimental impact on the children, caretakers, and communities they live in (Genty, 2003). Moreover, it has been shown that children with an incarcerated parent were at significantly higher risk of offending later in life (Farrington, Coid, & Murray, 2009). Thus, on top of learning about the different groups of inmates, and how to work with them, it is equally important for volunteers to learn how they can better journey with the families of the incarcerated.

The engagement of volunteers as a positive measure for reintegration is widely practiced in Singapore. Specifically for social service agencies, volunteers are key players in the delivery of programmes and services. Many of these volunteers are part of religious organisations that offer religious classes during the in-care or after-care phases. Another key area of involvement for volunteers in the correctional process is in the befriending programmes. Despite their long-standing and active involvement in our correctional process, little attention has been given to volunteers in research. However, given the large numbers of volunteers involved in the reintegration of offenders in Singapore, it would be beneficial to know more about their profile and the characteristics of the people who make up this unique group.

This research serves several purposes. First, the findings will allow us to understand the profile and motivations of volunteers who remain active in the sector. Second, it may serve as an informational tool for individuals who wish to be involved in the correctional sector as a future volunteer. Finally, it can serve as a guideline for the selection and training of volunteers among relevant organizations, thus allowing more effective delivery of services for returning offenders. Through this, we hope that more can be understood about the volunteers themselves: who they are, why they choose the correctional sector, and what makes them stay in the sector.

Methods

1. Participants

  The final sample consists of 44 participants aged between 23-69 years old. Participants were recruited through their organisation's volunteer coordinators. The selection criterion was individuals who have volunteered in the correctional sector for at least 6 months. Participants were volunteers that came from 12 different agencies. Of which, five were religious organisation and seven were secular organisations. The roles that participants were involved in include befriending, religious teaching and programmes, reading, parenting, and fundraising or other ad-hoc events. Table 1 summarises the characteristics of the final sample.

Table 1

Demographic information

	No. of participants
Gender	
Male	28
Female	16
Race	
Chinese	23
Malay	5
Indian	12
Others	4
Age	
30 years old and below	4
31-40 years old	8
41-50 years old	9
51-60 years old	13
Above 60 years old	10

2. Instruments

  This study adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches to meet its objectives. The survey instrument consisted of four sections: demographics, personality, coping methods, and motivating factors together with training needs. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

2.1 Demographics

  The demographic questionnaire was used to obtain basic information from the participants such as gender, race, education level, and volunteering experience in the correctional sector.

2.2 Personality

  The 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) is a representation of Goldberg (1992) markers for the Big-Five personality factors structure (Goldberg et al., 2006). The

current study consisted of 10 items for each of the Big-Five personality factors: (1) Extraversion (e.g. "Am the life of the party"), (2) Agreeableness (e.g. "Am interested in people"), (3) Conscientiousness (e.g. "Pay attention to details"), (4) Emotional Stability (e.g. "Am relaxed most of the time"), and (5) Intellect/Imagination (e.g. "Have a rich vocabulary"). The IPIP items were administered with a five-point, Likert scale ranging from 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate) as in the original instrument. 26 items were positively worded, and 24 items were negatively worded. Each personality factor was scored by averaging the responses of the 10 items. Good internal consistency was found for the total score of the IPIP questionnaire ($\alpha = .83$).

2.3 Coping Methods

The Brief COPE scale is an abbreviated version of the COPE Inventory developed to assess a range of coping responses to stressful events in life (Carver, 1997). The Brief COPE scale consists of 28-items measured on a 4-point, Likert scale ranging from 1 (I haven't been doing this at all) to 4 (I've been doing this a lot). A sample item is "I have been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do". The 28 items were scored according to 14 different coping styles – self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, emotional support, instrumental support, behavioural disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humour, acceptance, religion, and self-blame. An overall score was computed for an 'avoidant' style of coping (using scores for self-distraction, denial, substance use, behavioural disengagement, venting, and self-blame) and an 'approach' style (active coping, emotional support, instrumental support, positive reframing, planning, and acceptance). Excellent internal consistency was found for this sample ($\alpha = .90$).

2.4 Training Needs

Based on the proposed training framework for volunteers, six developmental domains had been identified for volunteers in the correctional sector. These six include: (1) knowledge on corrections, (2) befriending skills, (3) anger and addiction, (4) self-care, (5) general skills, and (6) individual and family work. A list of topics covering these domains can be found in Appendix B. In the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify the domain(s) they found useful and those they lacked training in.

2.5 Qualities of volunteers

Participants were asked for their opinion on what makes a good volunteer in the correctional sector. In the first part, they were asked to choose five qualities they perceived as necessary for a volunteer in the correctional sector from a given list. Some of the qualities listed include being passionate, non-judgemental, committed, and having empathy. Participants were also given the option to name other qualities, if any. They were then asked to rank the chosen qualities according to importance, with a higher rank indicating greater importance. The total score was calculated by adding up the number of times each quality was chosen as the top 5.

2.6 Interview

A semi-structured interview guide was used to obtain further information (Appendix C). Participants were asked about (1) their reasons for choosing to volunteer in the correctional sector, and what motivated them to remain as a volunteer in the sector, (2) feedback for training, and (3) how organisations in the correctional sector can better engage volunteers to improve retention.

3. Data collection

Prior to any data collection, the Participant Information Sheet (PIS; Appendix D) was explained or provided before consent was obtained. The PIS includes a description of the research purpose, permission for audio recording, the intended use of information, and safeguards to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality. They were informed that participation in this research was voluntary and they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. All identifiable information was separated at the earliest stage possible, and replaced with a code. All interview recordings and transcripts were stored securely in a computer with password protection.

Participants were asked to complete either an online or hardcopy questionnaire, lasting approximately 30 minutes. Subsequently, they were contacted to complete an interview. The interviews were conducted either in-person or by phone, lasting about 30-45 minutes each. Questionnaires and interviews completed in-person were done at SACA or at a suitable public location of the participant's choice.

4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected was used to understand the profile of volunteers. Interview data collected was examined using thematic analysis for identification of qualities deemed as important by the volunteers as well as their perspective on training needs.

Results

1. Profile of volunteers

On average, participants have a volunteering experience of 6 years and 10 months, and commit 7 hours to volunteering with ex-offenders every month. 26.2% mainly work with client in the in-care phase, 11.9% in the after-care phase, and 61.9% during both phases. Table 2 summarises the profile characteristics of volunteers.

Table 2

Profile of volunteers

	No. of participants
Education status	
Upper Secondary	2
Polytechnic	7
Pre-University/JC	2
University	30
Others	3
Marital status	
Single	11
Married	32
Divorced	1
Dependents	
Yes	31
No	13
Employed	
Yes	34
No	10
Volunteer experience	
Between 0-1 year	8
Between 1-5 years inclusive	18
Between 5-10 years inclusive	9
Between 10-15 years inclusive	3
Between 15-20 years inclusive	4
More than 20 years	2
Qualification in related field	
Yes	16
No	28
Work experience in related field	
Yes	18
No	26

Among the 31 participants with dependents, all of them listed only parents, spouse, and(or) children as their dependents. 22.7% listed spouse and children as their dependents, 15.9% listed spouse only, 13.6% mentioned children only, 11.4% listed their parents, 2.3% mentioned parents and children, and 4.5% listed parents, spouse and children.

Amongst the participants who were currently employed, 67.6% work 5 days per week. 20.6% work less than 5 days, and 11.8% working more than 5 days. On average, 47.1% work between 7-8 hours per day, with 11.8% working fewer than 7 hours, and 41.2% working more than 8 hours.

1.1 Personality and coping methods

The means and standard deviation for IPIP and COPE are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Scales Used

	Mean	SD
IPIP		
Extraversion	3.25	0.62
Agreeableness	4.15	0.40
Conscientiousness	4.08	0.44
Emotional Stability	3.71	0.71
Intellect/Imagination	3.71	0.48
COPE		
Self-distraction	2.07	0.65
Active coping	2.89	0.76
Denial	1.26	0.48
Substance use	1.16	0.49
Emotional support	2.13	0.78
Instrumental support	2.36	0.91
Behavioural disengagement	1.33	0.49
Venting	1.90	0.74
Positive reframing	2.98	0.87
Planning	3.02	0.83
Humour	1.86	0.91
Religion	2.89	1.10
Self-blame	1.74	0.62
Acceptance	2.98	0.76
Avoidant style	1.58	0.42
Approach style	2.73	0.61

In terms of personality, participants scored the highest for agreeableness (M = 4.15) and conscientiousness (M = 4.08), indicating they gear towards being more agreeable and conscientious. All of the participants scored above 3 for agreeableness, with 65.9% scoring 4 and above, indicating their higher tendency to have traits like being friendly, sympathetic and kind. Similarly, all of the participants scored above 3 for conscientiousness, with 63.6% scoring 4 and above, suggesting that they possess traits like being organised and thorough. While all of the participants scored above 3 for intellect/imagination, only 36.4% scored 4

and above. This implies that the majority tend to be more neutral towards being open to experiences.

For the extraversion scale, while the majority of participants (63.6%) scored above 3, only 11.4% tended to be more extraverted (i.e. scoring 4 and above). Also, 13.6% of the participants scored below 3 on the scale of emotional stability, suggesting that they may have the tendency to be tense or anxious easily.

On the COPE scale, the coping methods most often used by participants were planning (M = 3.02), positive reframing (M = 2.98), and acceptance (M = 2.98). This could be an indication that participants use positive coping strategies more often than the negative coping strategies. This could be observed from the overall score whereby the approach style of coping (M = 2.73) was more often used than the avoidant style of coping (M = 1.58).

2. Qualities and training needs

In the first part, participants were asked to choose 5 qualities they regarded as important for a volunteer to possess. Based on the total score, the top 5 qualities chosen were: 1) non-judgmental (n = 38), 2) committed (n = 30), 3) empathy (n = 27), 4) good communication skills (n = 24), 5) passionate (n = 21). The quality which was ranked first most often was being non-judgemental (n = 17), followed by being passionate (n = 8), which highlighted a huge difference in number of participants in regarding what was the most important quality.

With regards to 6 identified training areas, the areas regarded as most useful were befriending skills (n = 13), and anger and addiction (n = 11). The least useful areas chosen were self-care (n = 14), and knowledge on corrections (n = 13). The 3 areas that participants regarded as absolutely necessary were befriending skills (n = 31), anger and addiction (n = 26), and knowledge on corrections (n = 23). The areas which participants found themselves lacking training in were knowledge on corrections (n = 21), anger and addiction (n = 21), and individual and family work (n = 21).

Participants were also split into two groups, one group with qualifications or work experience, and one without qualifications and work experience. The former chose anger and addiction (n = 7) as the most useful area, while the latter chose befriending skills (n = 9). The least useful area chosen by the first group was knowledge on corrections (n = 7), and the latter chose self-care (n = 8). Hence, the areas which participants found useful or not useful may be dependent on their qualifications or experience in a related field.

Findings & Analysis

Interview data was used to explore what made the participants choose to volunteer in the correctional sector and what motivates them to continue volunteering. The methods to improve engagement and retention of volunteers in the sector were also explored.

1. Motivations to volunteer and stay in the correctional sector

Having some form of interest was the greatest motivation to volunteer in the correctional sector (n = 34). The interest among participants lies in wanting to volunteer or to give back to society (n = 21), having an interest to volunteer with ex-offenders (n = 25), or wanting an opportunity to learn through volunteering (n = 4). Specifically, participants wanted to learn more about the skills for helping and about the specific client group. Participants also found meaning in volunteerism and wanted to give back in whatever way possible. They were introduced to the sector by others, through recruitment advertisements in newspapers, or when browsing through different sectors to find out what volunteering opportunities were available. For other participants, they had a strong interest in wanting to volunteer specifically with the inmate or ex-offender population. Participants felt that this is a population often neglected and stigmatised by the public, but they deserve a second chance in life. They also believe that with support and guidance, the inmates could be led in the right direction. Lastly, interest also lay in being able to learn from their clients. Participants shared how it was an opportunity for learning from this population as they came from different walks of life. Even though they may be the ones providing guidance and support, they were also learning about the issues and challenges faced by inmates and ex-offenders. On top of that, participants also learnt some skills such as communication and listening skills that were key to the helping process.

Another motivating factor was the satisfaction derived from their involvement as a volunteer (n = 25). Participants felt a sense of satisfaction, by being able to see change in their clients (n = 16), from the feedback received from clients, (n = 6), and from being able to give back and do something they regard as meaningful (n = 8). Participants found satisfaction when they observed positive changes in their clients, mainly in the form of seeing how their relationship had progressed since the beginning, and in the client's way of thinking. Other participants were satisfied that they were able to give back and contribute, and found it enjoyable to be able to help this population. Lastly, the positive feedback given by clients also gave participants a sense of satisfaction that motivated them to continue volunteering. Participants shared that they felt joy when they were being appreciated by their clients.

Being able to make some contribution in the sector was also a factor that led to and allowed participants to volunteer (n = 23). Contributions named by participants included being able to support ex-offenders in their rehabilitation journey (n = 15), possessing the skills that could help to make a difference (n = 5), and being able to raise awareness about the sector (n = 6). One of the motivating factors was participants' desire to contribute to the sector by being a source of support. Inmates and ex-offenders often lack social support and resources that may be needed to help them successfully return to society. Hence, participants

wished to provide some form of prosocial support or to guide them about where to look for resources, such as employment. Participants were motivated to volunteer in the correctional sector as they felt that they had skills which may be beneficial to the helping process. This point was also voiced by 3 participants who were ex-offenders. They highlighted how having been through the criminal justice process gave them some ground knowledge about what the inmates were going through as it was something they had experienced. These participants also shared their observations on how other volunteers have very different backgrounds from the inmates, but also acknowledged their contributions to the work. Being able to raise awareness about the sector and how society can further support the returning offenders was another motivating factor for participants.

Self-motivation was equally important for volunteers to continue volunteering in this sector (n = 15). Participants expressed their initial fear of interacting with the inmates as they had never come in contact with this population, and felt that they may be a challenging population to work with. However, they found that it was the right 'fit' for them once they started and their fears were unfounded. They also shared a personal commitment to this work as they did not want to bail-out on the inmates after having established a relationship.

Some participants wanted to volunteer in the sector due to experiences at work (n = 7) or personal encounters (n = 6). Having work experience in a related sector, such as education or mental health, led participants to realise how their work experience may be relevant to reintegration. This grew their interest and also the concern they had for this sector and made them choose to volunteer. Personal experiences that made participants volunteer in the correctional sector include being incarcerated, having a family member who had been incarcerated or from their childhood encounters. Lastly, religion was also a factor to volunteer in the sector (n = 6). All these participants were Christians and mentioned they felt a calling to volunteer in the sector.

2. Training needs

28 participants shared that having training in the six areas was beneficial, especially for new volunteers or individuals without any qualifications or experience in a related field.

There were two reasons why participants chose a particular area as the most useful: (a) they found it useful to learn about the skills that can be utilised when interacting with clients (n = 14), or (b) they found it important to have some knowledge about topics that may be useful in their interactions with clients (n = 17). One participant also pointed out work experience as the reason for choosing the most useful area for training. Despite that, participants also stressed that the area which each volunteer found important may differ depending on the role that they were involved in. While topics from other training areas may not be chosen as the most useful, they still found it important to equip themselves with knowledge on other topics as all the areas are interlinked, and such information may still be useful as they could encounter different types of clients in future.

One reason highlighted by participants as to why they chose an area as the least useful was the perceived lack of need for it (n = 12). While they felt that training on all topics was

important, some topics were relatively less important, or it was an area which can be self-learnt. Another reason given was the usefulness of the topics (n = 6), in terms of working with their clients and how targeted the areas were. The role they were involved in was also a reason for ranking a training area as the least useful (n = 5).

Participants were also asked for feedback on what makes a good training session. Firstly, the trainer should be professional and an expert in the area of study (n = 8). They also felt that sharing of personal experiences by the trainers can enhance their learning. Next, the delivery of content and structure was important (n = 13). Participants found the use of multimedia, as well as roleplay and sharing of real cases by other volunteers to be useful as it helped them to have a better grasp of what might happen during a session with their clients. They added that it will also be helpful to include sharing by ex-offenders. One aspect that can be improved was the timing during which training was held (n = 12). It was highlighted that training sessions were usually held on weekdays, which made it difficult for participants to attend as they were unable to be away from their job. It was preferred for training to be held in the evening or on weekends.

20 participants mentioned wanting to have more in-depth training on certain topics and skills. In particular, they expressed a preference to have more training on communication skills, counselling skills, and knowledge on topics such as end of life and mental health.

3. Ways to engage and retain volunteers

The importance of social support (n = 17) was highlighted as one of the factors to encourage volunteer retention. This included having a community (n = 10), having a mentor (n = 6), and support from the organisation (n = 5). This is especially so for befrienders as they handle cases alone, and knowing that there are volunteers around to share their concerns would make them feel better supported. Social support could also come in the form of mentorship, where newer volunteers are paired with more experienced ones. Participants shared how such arrangements would allow volunteers to learn more about how to handle a case as there is another volunteer around to guide them. Support should also come from the organisation as they often turn to the volunteer coordinator when they need to review a case or to learn about the resources available to help a client. Well supported volunteers felt they were not left alone to settle the issues that arose from working with their clients.

Another way to help with retention of volunteers was to have some form of engagement between staff and volunteers (n = 20). Participants highlighted the importance of having regular contact or updates about the latest happenings (n = 18), and having a platform to share information or resources that can help the clients, such as an online portal or field trips (n = 8). Participants also highlighted that staff should not only contact them when there are new cases, but having more regular contact to know the volunteers on a personal level.

The feeling of being appreciated by staff for their contributions was mentioned by participants as one of the key factors for volunteer retention (n = 17). Possible extrinsic motivations mentioned by volunteers included attending annual dinners or receiving small gifts.

Another factor mentioned by participants was having greater involvement (n = 13). This included having more opportunities to utilise their skill sets and be part of new initiatives (n = 8), and being more involved in case discussions with other parties working with their clients as well as being able to know how clients had benefitted from their support (n = 5). Participants noted that interactions with the inmates or ex-offenders were limited and they had little knowledge on how their contributions had an impact on their clients. Other ways to engage and retain volunteers include regular training (n = 7), having a feedback channel (n = 6), and helping volunteers manage their expectations (n = 4).

Discussion

This study was driven by interest in understanding the profile and motivations of volunteers in Singapore's correctional sector. The findings allow us to identify some factors that may improve the selection, training, and retention of volunteers in the sector.

1. Demographic, personality, and coping methods

The first section explored the demographic profile, personality, and coping methods used by participants. Results showed that the majority of participants were above 50 years old, with university education, married, and employed. It was also found that participants tend to be highly agreeable and conscientious, with more than 60% scoring at least 4. This finding should also be viewed together with the volunteer qualities regarded as important by the participants, with being non-judgmental, committed, and having empathy as the three most important qualities to possess. Agreeableness is a trait that describes the overall kindness, sense of altruism, and an interest in wanting to help people. Past research had also found strong positive association between agreeableness and empathic concern (Song & Shi, 2017), as well as helping behaviours (Graziano, Habashi, Sheese, & Tobin, 2007). On the other hand, conscientiousness often describes a person who is goal-oriented and thoughtful. It is also associated with mindfulness, which is the purposeful and non-judgmental attention to the present moment (Giluk, 2009). Hence, this finding on personality traits coincides with the qualities important for a volunteer to have. Participants were also observed using more positive coping methods like planning, positive reframing, and acceptance when they encountered a problem.

2. Training for volunteers

Based on the six identified areas of training for volunteers, participants regarded the training on befriending skills, and anger and addiction as the most useful. Half of the sample found that training on befriending skills, anger and addiction, and knowledge on corrections was absolutely necessary. Areas that they found themselves lacking training in were also similar. They include: knowledge on corrections, anger and addiction, and individual and family work. However, this finding should be interpreted with care as participants also added that the type of training needed by the volunteers depends on their role and how they are involved in the work with inmates and ex-offenders. The areas chosen as the most and least useful appear to be dependent on whether the volunteer has qualifications and work experience in a related field. However, this point was not reflected as a reason that contributed to how they ranked the areas. Instead, participants felt that useful topics for training were those that were able to let them learn the skills and equip them with relevant knowledge when they interact with clients. On the flip side, topics which they found less relevant or targeted in helping their clients were regarded as less useful. The role of volunteers also determined how useful a topic may be at a particular point of their volunteering journey. Hence, it is emphasised that the type of training recommended for volunteers should be based on the skills necessary for them to perform their role.

From the feedback received, training should be conducted by a professional trainer, with greater involvement of experienced volunteers during role-play and sharing, aided by the use of multimedia.

3. Motivation and retention of volunteers in the correctional sector

The findings showed that having some form of interest was the reason that led participants to volunteering in the correctional sector. At the same time, having interest was also a motivating factor that made participants continue volunteering. The interest could lie in wanting to give back to society, the correctional population, or wanting to have opportunities to learn. Satisfaction from giving back and volunteering also motivated participants to remain active in the sector. The ability to make contributions to the sector led participants to volunteer. Some participants highlighted certain skills that they have which they believed could potentially help in the recovery of inmates and ex-offenders. Another reason for choosing this sector was the lack of public awareness for the cause. Participants highlighted the lack of volunteers in the sector and stigmatised views held by society regarding this population. This motivated them as they wished to raise awareness that returning offenders deserve a second chance. Also, participants wanted to volunteer in this sector as they felt that they were able to be a source of support for the inmates and ex-offenders. Satisfaction was also derived from this when they observed positive changes in their clients, as well as the feedback received from clients.

On the ways that organisations can retain volunteers, participants shared the need to have social support. Participants shared the importance of having a community where they can seek support from fellow volunteers, as well as from the organisation they are with. Knowing that they are not alone and being able to find support when needed would encourage volunteers, thus helping with retention. Participants also mentioned the need to have engagement between staff and volunteers. Having regular contact would allow staff and volunteers to know one another on a more personal level. This may encourage retention as volunteers experience a personal touch in the interactions. Next, participants highlighted how being more involved as a volunteer could help with retention. When volunteers are being viewed as a resource and an asset of the organisation, they would feel more appreciated and this may motivate them to continue volunteering. Lastly, intrinsic motivation from volunteers themselves is equally important in defining how long they will last in the sector. If the volunteer was not self-motivated, having an external pull may not be enough for them to continue volunteering.

4. Recommendations

4.1 Networking opportunities

One way to encourage volunteer retention is to focus on providing greater social support. This can be made possible by providing more opportunities for networking which help to create a community and camaraderie among volunteers. This will create a sense of

belonging and volunteers will feel less alone on their volunteering journey. This also allows them to share and learn from other volunteers. Networking sessions can be done through formal or informal channels. Formal channels would include training sessions where volunteers from different organisations come together. This provides a platform for volunteers to learn about what volunteers from other organisations do, as well as resources that may be available. Some informal ways include causal gatherings and field trips. It can also be done on an organisational level or between organisations. For example, volunteer coordinators may organise retreats and gatherings for volunteers in their organisations. They may also get in touch with volunteer coordinators from other organisations to create a bigger scale event, such as a mini sports day or family day event.

Such networking platforms should also be seen as an opportunity to build rapport between staff and volunteers. This is important as volunteers shared how support from their organisation was also important in the retention of volunteers. It should be highlighted that a community should be formed early on as that is the period where volunteers feel lost but are still highly enthusiastic about the cause. During the initial stages, volunteer coordinators should be involved in the ice-breaking process to help form the community. Having a sense of belonging in the initial stages might also make volunteering seem less intimidating as volunteers know that they are not alone in this journey. Subsequently, volunteers may, themselves, keep the group active once a community has been formed.

4.2 Engagements

More engagements between volunteer coordinators and volunteers will help in the retention of volunteers. A number of ways can be adopted to engage with the volunteers. First, there should be regular contact with the volunteers instead of doing so only when volunteers are needed. Having regular contact will allow volunteers and staff to connect on a more personal level, and allow volunteers to feel appreciated. This will also let volunteer coordinators be aware of the reasons for volunteers missing out on events or trainings that have been organised. Staff should provide updates involving the organisation, such as upcoming initiatives, programmes or any staff movement. Participants have highlighted the need to view volunteers as resources and utilise their skills by having more involvement in new initiatives, or to be involved in the development of new programmes. Hence, connecting with volunteers on a personal level will also allow staff to know how each volunteer would like to contribute and inform them of such opportunities when it arises.

Volunteers can also be engaged by providing information or resources that may be beneficial in helping their clients. Such information can be made available on an online portal or a chat group that volunteers can access. Another channel providing access to such resources includes field trips to other organisations in the correctional sector. As the resources available are ever-changing, volunteers often feel stuck when their clients ask for help. Hence, providing volunteers with up-to-date information will give them the ability to help their clients more effectively.

Showing appreciation to volunteers is another way to engage them. This can be done through formal events such as annual dinners and award ceremonies, or informal channels such as sending words of encouragements. More importantly, any engagements with volunteers should have a personal touch to it.

4.3 Recruitment and selection

Organisations should take more active steps in the recruitment of volunteers. One point highlighted by the participants was the lack of awareness about the inmate and ex-offender population, as well as the volunteering opportunities available in the sector. There can be more effort to reach out to the public to find interested volunteers, such as to churches, universities, and grassroots organisations. With an increase in the number of applicants, organisations may have a bigger pool of volunteers and also select individuals whose expectations align with those of the organisation. Care should also be taken to ensure that the recruitment practices target the right kind of volunteers.

Personality tests may be added as a component on top of interviews for future selection of volunteers. As seen from the results, personality domains such as agreeableness and conscientiousness could be an indication of certain qualities that a good volunteer should have. It is equally important to understand the reasons why individuals choose to volunteer in the first place as this provides information on how to recruit additional volunteers, area of work most appropriate for them, and also encourage retention. Even though external motivations may help with retention of volunteers, being intrinsically motivated will affect whether they will continue volunteering. From the findings, it was observed that people with high interest and wanting to make contributions to the sector are the main reasons for volunteering and remaining active as a volunteer in the sector.

4.4 Training and feedback

Training should be provided at the start, as well as throughout the course of the volunteering journey. It was observed that more than half of the sample in this study did not have any qualifications or work experience in any related field. Hence, providing training in the relevant areas would help to provide some background knowledge before volunteers are assigned any clients, and allow them to feel better prepared to provide their services. Even for participants with relevant qualifications and work experience, they had pointed out the importance of having skills and knowledge related to the sector and service they will be providing. In addition, refresher training should be given so volunteers stay updated on any changing trends in the field. It is useful for volunteers to attend a refresher course after they have started working with clients to help them better appreciate and relate to the content delivered during the training. It is also useful to cater training needs based on volunteer roles and what volunteers feel will be helpful for them, especially during their initial stages as a volunteer. For the more experienced volunteers, respective organisations can consider sending them for training on more specialised skills or topics. Volunteers may also be given the opportunity to specialise in an area that they may be more interested in.

The expectations of a volunteer should be made clear during initial briefing or training. Staff should let volunteers understand what their roles are, as well as what can or cannot be done as a volunteer. As new volunteers may begin their volunteering journey with the mindset or attitude of wanting to help every person, staff should also help volunteers manage their own expectations to prevent compassion fatigue or burnout in trying to help their clients.

Having channels for feedback between staff and volunteers is also important. This will allow both parties to understand how different aspects of the volunteer programme could be improved, and understand how the volunteer is coping. Having more open conversations also allow volunteers to feel that the organisation is concerned about their well-being and feel more supported. Feedback can also be in the form where volunteers are informed of how their contributions had impacted the clients they worked with.

On top of training for volunteers, it is equally important for staff who are working with volunteers to attend relevant trainings. This will allow them to engage with the volunteers better.

5. Limitations

As the recruitment of participants was partially dependent on the involvement of volunteer coordinators from various organisations, there was limited access to all potential participants who may qualify for the study. Even though participants in this study came from different organisations, there is still a possibility that some volunteers were not aware of this study. Hence, this might limit the generalizability of the results as not all organisations in the correctional sector with volunteer involvement were represented in this study.

In addition, there were only 5 participants who were not working directly with ex-offenders. Hence, the findings for this study may be more relevant to volunteers who work directly with inmates or ex-offenders.

The areas of training included in this study only consisted of modules facilitated by SACA. Even though training is provided by other organisations, it is usually for volunteers in the respective organisation. There is also little information on what is the best practice for volunteer training. Therefore, the findings on training needs in this study only serve as a guideline on the areas which volunteers find more useful to perform their role. An evaluation may be required to find out how the current training framework can be further enhanced. While it may not be a full reflection of the training needs of all volunteers, the finding in this study still provided some insight on the aspects of training which volunteers find important.

Conclusion

Despite the importance of volunteers in the correctional sector in Singapore, little attention had been given to learn more about this unique group of people in research. Through the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, this study has allowed us to better understand the profile of volunteers, their training needs, as well as their motivations for volunteering in the correctional sector. Certain personality traits may predict whether individuals have the qualities that are regarded as a good volunteer, but understanding their motivations for joining the sector is important during the selection and recruitment process. To further develop their skills, regular training should be provided and conducted based on progressive levels of difficulty. Allowing volunteers to specialise in a specific area may help them perform their role better. Subsequently, it is also important to build the rapport among staff and volunteers to form a community and sustain motivation. Providing continuous support for volunteers can hone their skills and knowledge, which will be beneficial for the volunteer, their clients, and the organisation. To further increase the retention rate, organisations should also consider the opinions voiced by volunteers on how they want to be engaged.

As this study had only considered the inputs of volunteers, it may be beneficial for future research to account for the views of inmates and ex-offenders. They can also provide an insight on how volunteers may support them in their reintegration journey, as well as the qualities which make a good volunteer. Taking into account input from clients may also help with recruitment of volunteers in future.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

SECTION [A]

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. What is your race?

☐ Chinese   ☐ Malay   ☐ Indian   ☐ Others: _____

3. What is your birth year?

_____

4. What is your highest level of education completed?

☐ No education   ☐ Primary school

☐ Lower secondary school   ☐ Upper secondary school

☐ JC / Pre-University   ☐ ITE

☐ Polytechnic   ☐ University

☐ Others: _____

5. What is your marital status?

☐ Single   ☐ Single – in a relationship

☐ Married   ☐ Divorced

☐ Separated   ☐ Widowed

☐ Others: _____

6. Do you have any dependents?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please list:

_____

7. Are you currently employed?

☐ Yes: _____ (Job title)   ☐ No (skip to question 10)

8. How many days do you work per week?

_____

9. On average, how many hours do you work per day?

☐ Less than 3 hours   ☐ Between 3 – 4 hours

☐ Between 4 – 5 hours   ☐ Between 5 – 6 hours

☐ Between 6 – 7 hours   ☐ Between 7 – 8 hours

☐ More than 8 hours: _____

10. How long have you been a volunteer in the correctional sector?

_____ years _____ months

11. I work with clients mainly in the…

☐ In-care phase   ☐ After-care phase   ☐ Both

12. On average, how much time do you commit to volunteer work (with ex-offenders) per month?

_____

13. Do you have any certifications or qualifications in psychology / counselling / social work / related field?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please list certifications:

_____

_____

14. Do you have any work experience in the field of psychology / counselling / social work / related field?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, please list job(s) and for how long:

_____

_____

SECTION [B]

Describe yourself as you are **now**, not what you wish to be in the future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself, in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age. Indicate for each statement whether it is 1. Very Inaccurate, 2. Moderately Inaccurate, 3. Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate, 4. Moderately Accurate, or 5. Very Accurate as a description of you.

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
1.	Am the life of the party.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Feel little concern for others.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Am always prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Get stressed out easily.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Have a rich vocabulary.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Don't talk a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Am interested in people.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Leave my belongings around.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Am relaxed most of the time.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Feel comfortable around people.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Insult people.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Pay attention to details.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Worry about things.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Have a vivid imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Keep in the background.	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
17.	Sympathize with others' feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Make a mess of things.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Seldom feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Am not interested in abstract ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	Start conversations.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	Am not interested in other people's problems.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Get chores done right away.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	Am easily disturbed.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Have excellent ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Have little to say.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Have a soft heart.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Often forget to put things back in their proper place.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Get upset easily.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Do not have a good imagination.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Talk to a lot of different people at parties.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Am not really interested in others.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Like order.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Change my mood a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Am quick to understand things.	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Don't like to draw attention to myself.	1	2	3	4	5

		Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
37.	Take time out for others.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	Shirk my duties.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Have frequent mood swings.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	Use difficult words.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	Don't mind being the center of attention.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	Feel others' emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	Follow a schedule.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	Get irritated easily.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Spend time reflecting on things.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	Am quiet around strangers.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	Make people feel at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
48.	Am exacting in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
49.	Often feel blue.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Am full of ideas.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION [C]

Each item below says something about a particular way of coping with stressful events in life. Indicate to what extent you've been doing what the item says, how much or how frequently. Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not – just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

		I haven't been doing this at all	I've been doing this a little bit	I've been doing a medium amount	I've been doing this a lot
1.	I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.	1	2	3	4
2.	I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.	1	2	3	4
3.	I've been saying to myself "this isn't real".	1	2	3	4
4.	I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.	1	2	3	4
5.	I've been getting emotional support from others.	1	2	3	4
6.	I've been giving up trying to deal with it.	1	2	3	4
7.	I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.	1	2	3	4
8.	I've been refusing to believe that it has happened.	1	2	3	4
9.	I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feeling escape.	1	2	3	4
10.	I've been getting help and advice from other people.	1	2	3	4

		I haven't been doing this at all	I've been doing this a little bit	I've been doing a medium amount	I've been doing this a lot
11.	I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.	1	2	3	4
12.	I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	1	2	3	4
13.	I've been criticizing myself.	1	2	3	4
14.	I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.	1	2	3	4
15.	I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone.	1	2	3	4
16.	I've been giving up the attempt to cope.	1	2	3	4
17.	I've been looking for something good in what is happening.	1	2	3	4
18.	I've been making jokes about it.	1	2	3	4
19.	I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.	1	2	3	4
20.	I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.	1	2	3	4
21.	I've been expressing my negative feelings.	1	2	3	4
22.	I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.	1	2	3	4

		I haven't been doing this at all	I've been doing this a little bit	I've been doing a medium amount	I've been doing this a lot
23.	I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do.	1	2	3	4
24.	I've been learning to live with it.	1	2	3	4
25.	I've been thinking hard about what steps to take.	1	2	3	4
26.	I've been blaming myself for things that happened.	1	2	3	4
27.	I've been praying or meditating.	1	2	3	4
28.	I've been making fun of the situation.	1	2	3	4

SECTION [D]

1. (a) From the list below, choose five qualities you think is necessary for a volunteer in the correctional sector.

☐ Passionate   ☐ Committed

☐ Selfless   ☐ Reliable

☐ Good communication skills   ☐ Willing to learn

☐ Resilient   ☐ Humble

☐ Flexible to changes   ☐ Proactive

☐ Enthusiastic   ☐ Non-judgemental

☐ Compassionate   ☐ Empathy

☐ Receptive to feedback   ☐ Others: _____

(b) Rank the five qualities in order of their importance (1 being the most important).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. The following 6 domains had been identified for volunteer training:
    - Knowledge on corrections (e.g. crime and punishment)
    - Befriending skills (e.g. dealing with communication breakdown)
    - Anger & addiction (e.g. helping client manage anger, addiction and mental health)
    - Self-care (e.g. how to prevent and address compassion fatigue)
    - General skills (e.g. understanding and responding to emotions, be an assertive volunteer)
    - Individual & family work (e.g. grief management of incarcerated and their families)

Out of the 6 identified domains,

(a) Which is the most useful?

_____

(b) Which is the least useful?

_____

(c) Which 3 domains do you think is absolutely necessary?

_____

_____

_____

(d) Which 2 domain(s) do you find yourself lacking in training?

_____

_____

Appendix B

List of training modules for volunteers provided by SACA

Knowledge on Corrections	Befriending Skills	Anger and Addiction	Self-Care	General Skills	Individual and Family work
1. Crime & Punishment 2. Issues in Corrections 3. Prisonisation and Prison Identities 4. Sociological Criminology Theories on Criminal Behaviour	1. Befriending Skills for the Offender Population	1. Anger and Addictions: The Troublesome Pair 2. Helping our Clients Manage Anger 3. Introduction to Addiction Counselling 4. Working with Substance Abusers 5. Working with Youth and Adult Substance Abusers	1. How to Prevent and Address Compassion Fatigue 2. Preventing Compassion Fatigue: Caring for Self 3. Setting and Standing by Healthy Boundaries	1. Appreciation of Cultural Diversity and Sensitivity for Ex-offenders and their Families 2. Being an Assertive Volunteer 3. Developing Facilitation Skills 4. Effective People Helping Skills 5. Effective People Helping through Understanding of Personality (DISC Model) 6. How to be an Effective People Helper 7. How to Facilitate Groups 8. Facilitation Skills for Groupwork in Prison Context 9. People Helping Skills Through Meaningful Use of Frameworks and Self 10. Specific Micro Skills for People Helper 11. Understanding and Responding to Emotions in People Helping	1. Applying Basic Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT): Concepts with the Offending Population 2. Cognitive Restructuring in Offending Population 3. Dealing with Difficult Offenders 4. How to Support and Attend to Families with Incarcerated Family Members 5. Journeying with the Incarcerated in their Grief 6. Motivating Offenders to Change 7. Understanding and Helping Offenders with Mental Health Issues 8. Using Motivational Interviewing in the Prison Context 9. Working with Difficult Offenders 10. Working with Families of Incarcerated Persons 11. Working with Youth Offenders

Appendix C

Interview guide

1. What made you choose to volunteer in the correctional sector?
2. What motivates you to stay in the sector as a volunteer after so many years?
3. Do you have any feedback regarding the 6 identified areas for training?
4. Do you have any feedback for the current or past training for volunteers?
5. What can be done to encourage volunteers to be more active and stay in the sector longer?
6. How can organizations engage their volunteers better?

Appendix D

Participant Information Sheet and Consent form

GUIDELINES ON PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (PIS) & CONSENT FORM (CF)

1. **Study title**

   Volunteers in Corrections: Profiles and Training Needs

2. **Principal Investigator and co-investigator(s), if any**

   Yeo Jia Ying

   Ibrahim Bin Abdul Alim

3. **Introduction**

   You are invited to participate in a research project by Singapore After-Care Association (SACA). The Principal Investigator or representative will describe and answer all your questions regarding the research. Read all the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding to take part in the study.

4. **What is the purpose of this research?**

   The purpose of this study is to identify the profile of active, long-term volunteers in the correctional sector. The research also seeks to provide some considerations on how to improve volunteer selection and training in the sector.

5. **Who can participate in the research?**

   a) The participant should be a volunteer working with clients in the correctional sector.

   b) The participant should have at least 2 years of volunteering experience in the sector, where possible.

6. **What is the expected duration of my participation?**

   The participant is invited to complete a questionnaire and an interview. Each part will take approximately 30 minutes.

7. **What is the duration of this research?**

   The research will be conducted between June 2019 and September 2019.

8. **What will be done if I take part in this research?**

   If you decide to take part in this research, you will complete a questionnaire on your profile and experiences as a volunteer in the correctional sector. You will also be asked to share your feedback regarding training for volunteers in the sector.

   Upon your consent, the interview will be audio-recorded to facilitate transcribing of interview data. Recorded information will solely be used for the purpose of analysis contributing to the research and will not be circulated externally.

9. **Personal Data Protection Act**

   Personal data collected will only be used to contact the participant for interview and analysis contributing to the purpose of this research.

10. **How will my privacy be protected?**

    Any information obtained in connection with this research that can be identified to you shall remain confidential. Confidential information will only be disclosed without your consent under these circumstances:

    a) When participant discloses information that could endanger him/herself;

    b) When information disclosed by participant might cause hurt to him/herself or others;

    c) When the participant discloses information that could assist an ongoing investigation;

    d) When information is required by law.

    Only the Principal Investigator and representative will have your identifiable information and this will not be released to any other persons. Identifiable information will NOT be used in any publications or presentation. All your identifiable information and research data will be coded (i.e. only identified with a code number) and separated at the earliest possible stage of the research. Pseudo names will be used in discussion and research findings. Your research data will be stored securely in a computer with password protection and destroyed upon completion of study.

11. **What are the discomforts and risks for the participants?**

    There are no potential risks for this research.

12. **What is the compensation for any injury?**

    No compensation will be given as injuries are not expected.

13. **What are the possible benefits to me and others?**

    There is no immediate benefit to you by participating in this research. However, participating in this research will add to the knowledge base and improvement of volunteer selection and training in the correctional sector in future.

14. **Can I refuse to participate in this research?**

    Participation is voluntary and you can choose whether or not to be in the research. You can also choose to withdraw from the research within one week upon the completion of questionnaire and (or) interview, without any consequences of any kind or loss of benefits which you are otherwise entitled. Upon withdrawal, all collected information will be excluded from the research.

15. **Whom should I call if I have any questions or problems?**

    Please contact the Principal Investigator (Attn: Jia Ying) at telephone 62942350 / 62942763 or email jia.ying@saca.org.sg for all research-related matters.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent form:

I hereby acknowledge that:

1. **I have received a copy of this information sheet that explains the objectives and nature of this research.**
2. **I understand its contents and agree to participate in the research.**
3. **I can withdraw from the research at any point of time by informing the Principal Investigator and all my data will be discarded.**
4. **I understand and agree for my personal information to be collected for the purposes stated below:**
   a. **For contacting me for further interview**
   b. **For analysis contributing to the purpose of this research**
5. **I understand that all information will remain confidential, and will only be disclosed without consent under these situations:**
   a. **When I disclose information that could endanger myself**
   b. **When I disclose information that might cause hurt to myself or others**
   c. **When I disclose information that could assist in an ongoing investigation**
   d. **When the information is required by law.**
6. **I agree / disagree to have my interview recorded. Notes will be taken if consent for recording is not given.**
7. **I agree / disagree to the use of anonymous quotes for publication or presentation purposes (if applicable).**

_____   _____

Name and Signature (Participant)   Date

_____   _____

Name and Signature (Consent Taker)   Date