

The Road from Crime to Community



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The punishment paradox

- Crime is a source, a sign, and a symptom of **relational** problems.
- Punishment often makes relational problems worse.



Nothing (and noone) to lose

‘[Kevin] struggled to name anyone he could rely on after he had left [the youth service]. He tried desperately to make something of himself and to prove to his family that he was worthy of a second chance. However, unable to get a job and being repeatedly confronted with his lack of education and prospects, his attempts at act-desistance in a relational vacuum eventually became too much for too little, and he cracked. By the final interview he had re-offended and had committed his most serious offence to date. His exasperation with his mere existence was exposed as he said the night of the offence he had had enough and went ‘looking for a fight’ and took his chance when he got it.

Interviewer: Is there anything you fear losing if you went to prison?

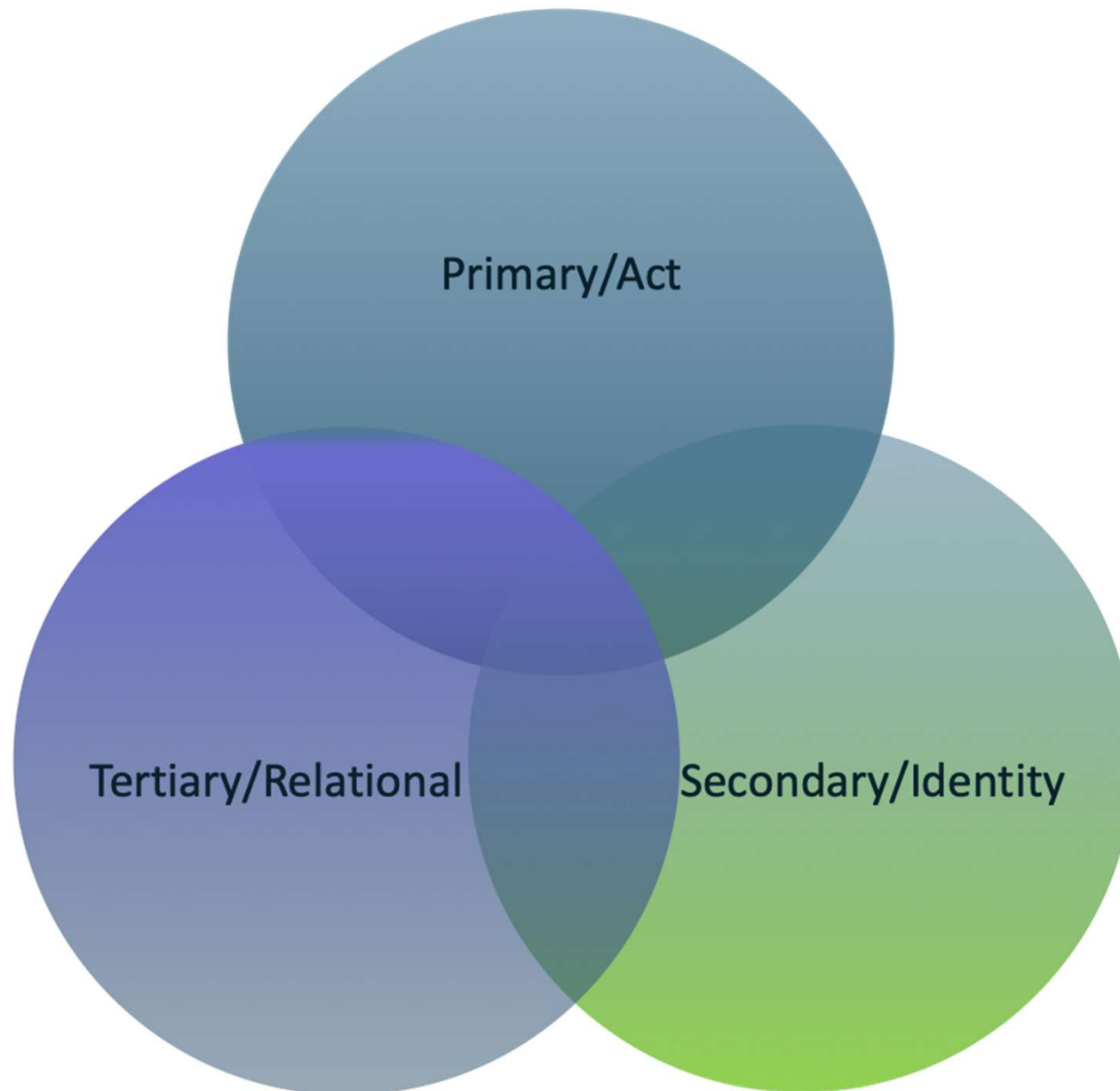
Kevin: Nothing.

Interviewer: Nothing?

Kevin: Nothing.’

(Nugent and Schinkel, 2016: 578-579)

Three dimensions



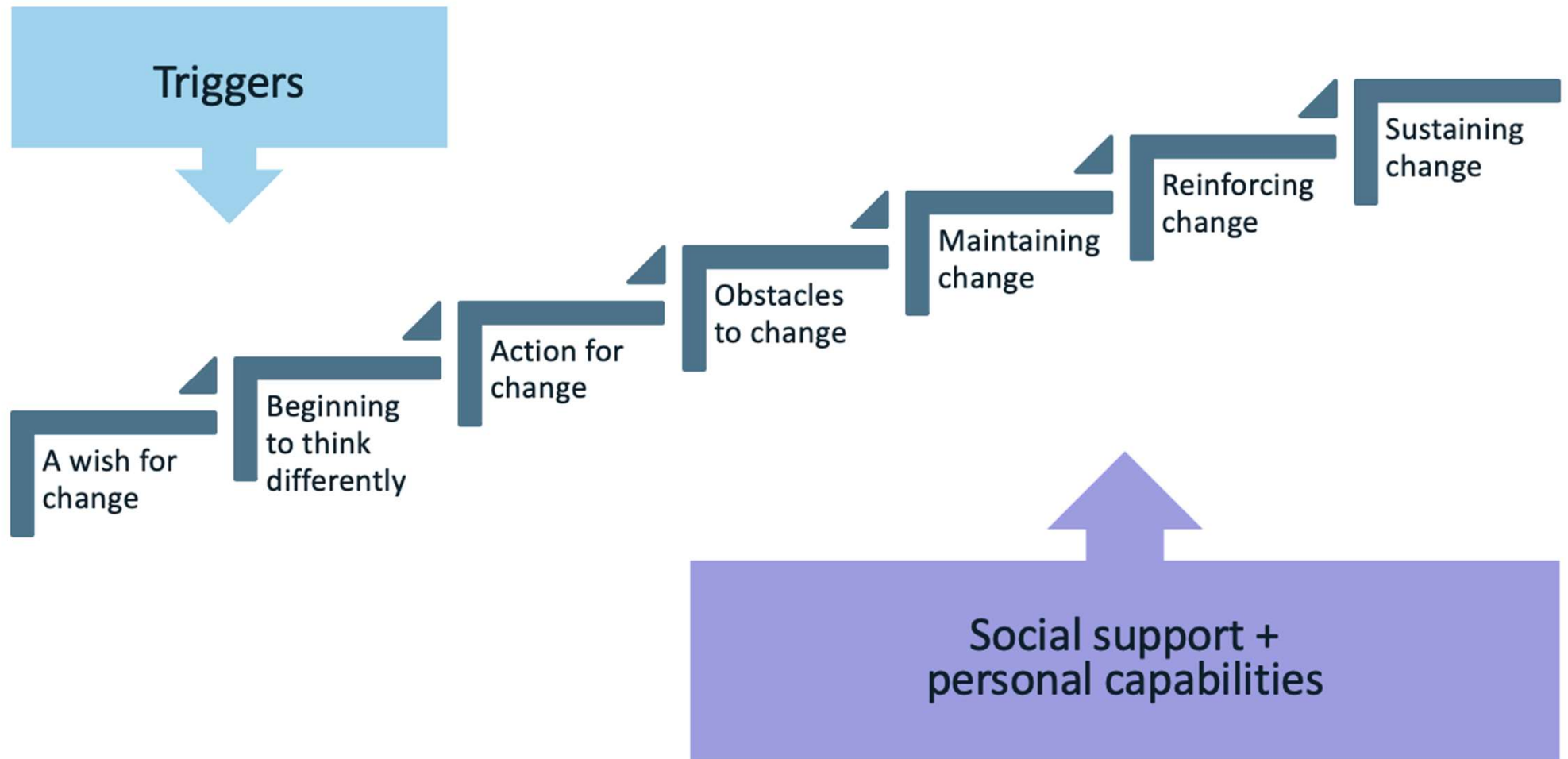
The road to integration: Understanding desistance

- A (natural) process of development, bigger and broader than a professional practice process
- But one that can be supported or undermined by policy and practice
- Supporting desistance requires an expanded conception of evidence-based practice
 - Yes, ‘what works’ matters, but so does how and why people change, and sustain change.



Steps to desistance

(Bottoms and Shapland, 2011)



Contexts of and resources for desistance

- Different socio-structural contexts
 - e.g. social class, poverty/inequality, social im/mobility, labour market conditions, racism and racialisation, minoritisation, social policies
- Different cultural dynamics
 - e.g. ethnic diversity, religion, communities
- Different personal/individual influences
 - e.g. sex, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, neuro-diversity, prior trauma



Hungry but I can't eat. Not allowed and don't sleep
In my own bed, any more: a uniform to show you who I am.
Boring, but it's so easy: Same faces all of of the time,
And my girl on the brain, I'm in dire need of change,
But I'll miss it all the same...

*Give me the news and an honest pay cheque
A season-book and a set of wheels
A flash of your eye from across the party
A quiet life, an open door.*

Strange place, familiar faces:
Old furniture brings it all back, the new makes me curious.
And I might miss the routine, but I'd replace it with that scene
In front of me any day, I'm amazed at the ways it's gonna change.

It's amazing how surrounded by so many people,
you can still be lonely;
I'm only after opening my own door.

- Questions?

Recognise and
celebrate
PROGRESS

@anninavilkas

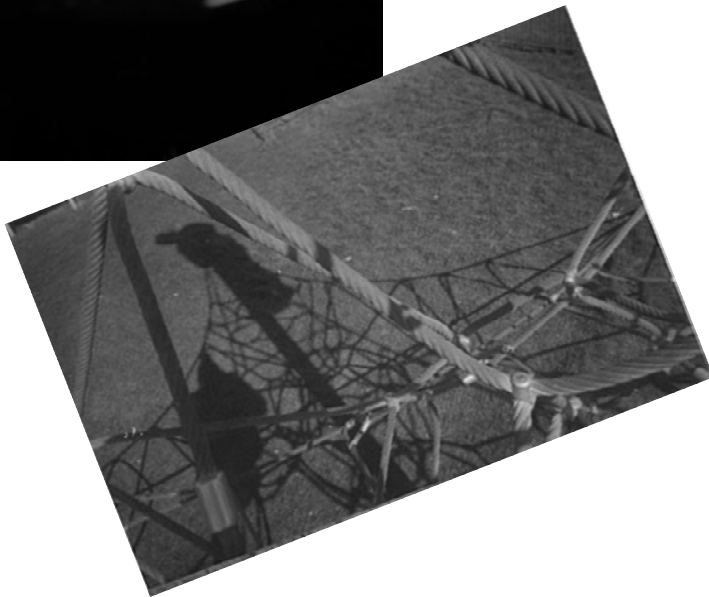
Frustrating desistance

- Schinkel and Nugent (2016): The pains of desistance
 - Two very different samples... similar experiences
 - The pains of isolation
 - The pains of goal failure
 - The pains of hopelessness
- There are **structural and cultural barriers** to desistance and re/integration which must be addressed; otherwise supporting **promoting hope** and **personal transformation** may be cruel.

Two tales of supervision

- Both examples look back on experiences of criminal justice supervision
 - One exemplifies negative experiences that left the person feeling trapped and their life prospects limited.
 - One exemplifies a positive and life-transforming experience that liberated a young person and shaped a positive future.
- The two examples are discussed in more detail in this podcast:
<https://www.sccjr.ac.uk/podcast/teejay-mary-two-tales-of-supervision/>

A bad example: 'Blankface'



<https://voxlminis.bandcamp.com/album/seen-and-heard-ep>

The clock spins, zero hour begins

This is the end, the end again

Here sits Blankface and she spins my tale

I've stopped listening now I know that I'll fail

Tick by tick and line by line

Thread by thread now you weave mine

A web of shadows, a silk spun tomb

A windowless room, windowless room

Sliding doors open and they welcome me in

This is the place, the place we pay for sin

These four seasons they reflect in glass

Trapped in a jar here where the time will not pass

Tick by tick and line by line

One day ending, a new day begins

Tick says 'he'll do it', again and again and again

You see what you want but I know it's not real

Anyone out there who can feel what I feel?

A good example: Mary's story

- A very 'good story' of 1960s probation, from an oral histories project
- She was 17 year old, on probation for a second offence: rebelling against classed and gendered constraints, and her frustrated hopes
- Interview excerpt...

Mary's story



<https://www.willowtearoomstrust.org/the-front-saloon>

Grace recognizing Mary

- She moves towards her (socially)
 - As opposed to maintaining hierarchy and distance
- She practices hospitality
 - As opposed to hostile authority
- She listens attentively
 - As opposed to lecturing (like the judge and the first PO)
- She hears and validates Mary's story
 - As opposed to imposing another story on her (unlike everyone else in her life)
- She shows Mary her potential (the tearoom 'turning point')
 - As opposed to cementing her current position
- She sets about co-authoring a new story with Mary
 - By licensing silence about a discrediting past

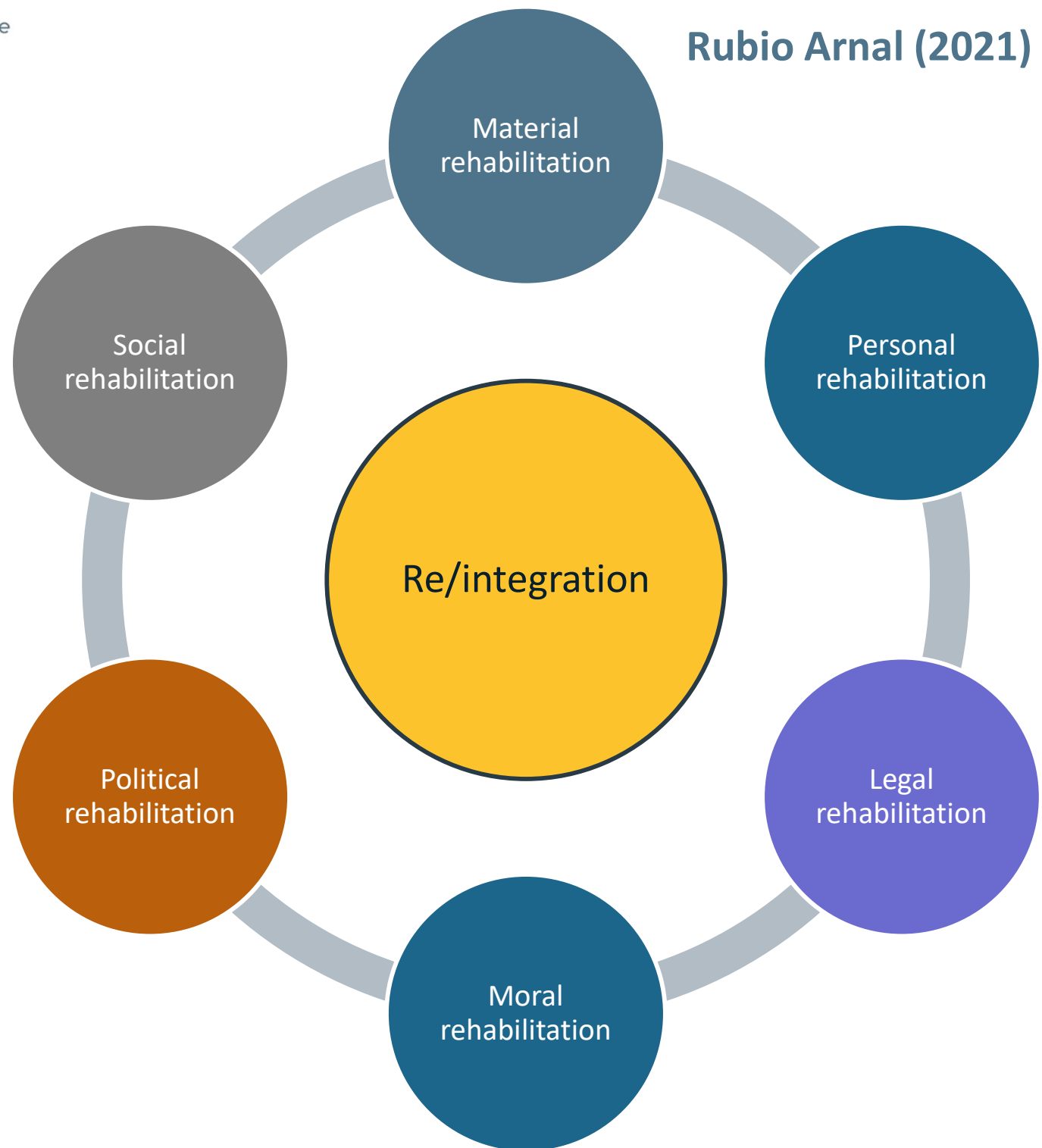
Comparing Teejay and Mary

- Teejay's misrecognition by 'Blankface' means that he is stuck in an unequal, vulnerable and degraded social position; one which entails **immobility**, irrespective of his changed disposition.
- Mary's recognition by Grace means that her **movement** (not just through probation but in her wider life trajectory) is enabled.

Re/integration ('success')
requires:

- Material redistribution
- Recognition of worth and potential
- Recognition of equal citizenship rights
- Recognition as a moral subject, capable of reparation
- Representation as a member of the polity
- Recognition as part of 'we'/'us'

Resourced by the state,
enabled by and with civil
society and citizens.





Travelling with you...

- Probation misrecognizes where it is **monological**; the state and its agents impose narratives *of* people *on* people. This creates problems of legitimacy and of immobility (often by reifying risk).
- Probation recognizes (and finds legitimacy) where it is **dialogical** (listening and hearing before it speaks) and where it enables forward movement, respecting people *both* as they are *and* for what they can become.
- In this sense, probation is less about enabling repair and return, and more about 're/integrative momentum' (du Bois Pedain, 2017) and onward mobility, especially for young people.



- Questions