CrimRxiv

Review 2 of "'It's Not a Conversation Starter.' Or is it?: Stigma Management Strategies of the Formerly Incarcerated in Personal and Occupational Settings"

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Vote: Publish pending minor changes

[For votes to count, referees must reasonably explain why they voted as they did. Thus, please explain your vote. If you voted to publish pending minor changes, specify each change, why it is needed, and, possibly, how it should/could be done.]

The paper is a nice contribution to the literature on stigma management. There are novel findings that add dimensions to the topic. My main concern is that the paper is too long. The Literature Review could be condensed and the Findings section could be drastically reduced to focus only on the novel contributions to the stigma management literature. If the authors are willing to do this, the paper would require some reframing to draw a focus to the contexts (employment and interpersonal relationships) in which strategies are considered and how they sometimes change over time and depending on the presence of a "wise" other. I include more comments below.

[Please put additional info below, as/if you see fit.]

- Page 2 first full paragraph – can you cite sources to support the contention that reactions to stigma vary by crime type?
- The Theoretical Perspectives section is thorough and includes topics relevant to the focus of the paper, but can you (with brevity) point to the connections between stigma and labeling theory?
- Consider condensing the Stigma and Labeling theory subsections to draw attention to the Stigma Management subsection
- The subsection Reentry and the Labor Market does not fit neatly in the Theoretical Perspectives section. Perhaps this and the following subsection could be under the heading "Context."
- This may or may not be helpful, but my study on parole disclosure (preventative telling) in online dating contexts (Evans & Blount-Hill, 2020) could lend more support to the subsection Interpersonal Relationships and Stigma
- Can you briefly explain how the "open coding" process worked?
- One participant is employed full time but has an income of \$0 – if that is correct please explain.
- Be consistent with header styles – under the Findings section the subsections are not italicized as they were in prior sections
- At the end of the Anticipated Stigma subsection you mention that educational opportunities can help preserve a positive self-image, but none of the quotes in this section mentioned education
- The Findings section is immense. It read like two separate findings sections. Since the first half mostly confirms prior MLT research, why not cut the first half (Anticipated Stigma, Secrecy, Withdrawal, and Preventative Telling) and start with the Employment of Stigma Management

Strategies subsection, where the information becomes more novel? The more interesting findings are that strategies shift over time and depending on context and relationship to the person.

- Consider cutting the first two sentences of the Discussion section.
- In the Discussion I recommend not reporting percentages for a qualitative study with such a small sample size (the 40% number you reference is misleading since it equates to 4 white respondents)