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## **Meanness, Boldness and Disinhibition: Do Triarchic Psychopathy Components of New Zealand High-Risk Parolees Predict Probation Officer Relationship Quality, Quality of Life on Parole and Recidivism?**

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Abstract:	<p>The Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM; Patrick &amp; Drislane, 2015) is a self-report scale based on the Triarchic Model that has been little used in research in the criminal justice system. We sought to examine associations between pre-release TriPM components, probation officer relationships, and parolee quality of life, both measured after 2 months in the community, and reconviction 12 months after release. Using data from 234 New Zealand male high-risk prisoners, we tested 4 multivariate models each across three timepoints. Pre-release, we found Boldness was not predictive, but Meanness predicted poorer relationship quality after 2 months, both from probation officer and parolee perspectives, with the former in turn predicting reconviction within 12 months. Disinhibition predicted 12-month recidivism regardless of relationship quality or external life circumstances. This relationship to recidivism was partially explained in the final model which linked Disinhibition and poorer subjective wellbeing, with the latter in turn predicting recidivism.</p>

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11  
12 **Abstract**  
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16 based on the Triarchic Model that has been little used in research in the criminal justice system.  
17 We sought to examine associations between pre-release TriPM components, probation officer  
18 relationships, and parolee quality of life, both measured after 2 months in the community, and  
19 reconviction 12 months after release. Using data from 234 New Zealand male high-risk  
20 prisoners, we tested 4 multivariate models each across three timepoints. Pre-release, we found  
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23 reconviction within 12 months. Disinhibition predicted 12-month recidivism regardless of  
24 relationship quality or external life circumstances. This relationship to recidivism was partially  
25 explained in the final model which linked Disinhibition and poorer subjective wellbeing, with the  
26 latter in turn predicting recidivism.  
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12 Although psychopathy is sometimes glamorized in entertainment media, working with, or  
13 living alongside people with high levels of psychopathy may be more challenging than  
14 entertaining. Various components of psychopathy are theorized to have direct and indirect effects  
15 on aspects of social functioning and other forms of adjustment (e.g., in the corporate world,  
16 Boddy & Taplin, 2016; Diller et al., 2020). In the criminal justice system, research has focused  
17 mostly on psychopathy's association with criminal behavior, with little research on what effects  
18 components of psychopathy may have on the intermediate steps to preventing recidivism,  
19 including those that involve effective social relationships such as working with correctional staff  
20 for better personal outcomes, building social and material resources for reintegration, or  
21 (re)establishing a sense of wellbeing. This study presents an exploratory investigation of  
22 associations between high-risk violent prisoners' self-reported psychopathy component scores,  
23 and two types of intermediate variables important to successful re-entry or reintegration,  
24 including quality of life in the community, and relationships with their supervising probation  
25 officers.  
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44 **The Triarchic Model of Psychopathy**  
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47 Psychopathy is widely regarded as the most important form of personality disorder or  
48 disturbance in the criminal justice system, particularly for its associations with criminal behavior  
49 and criminal risk. Yet there remains significant debate about how it should best be defined and  
50 conceptualized (Skeem et al., 2011), and whether it should be understood as a "classical  
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3 syndrome, that is, a constellation of signs and symptoms that covary across individuals”, or “as a  
4 compound trait, that is a *configuration* [italics original] of largely uncorrelated attributes that  
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6 combine to forge an interpersonally malignant condition” (both Lilienfeld et al., [2016], p. 1174).  
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10 The Triarchic Psychopathy model (Patrick et al., 2009) was developed to integrate disparate  
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12 historic views of psychopathy. Patrick and colleagues proposed that three distinct phenotypic  
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14 constructs interact to create the divergent pictures of psychopathy that characterize the literature.  
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16 These three constructs are (a) *Boldness*: a relatively benign expression of underlying  
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18 fearlessness, and comprising collectedness in threatening and stressful situations, social poise  
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20 and effectiveness, confidence, and tolerance for uncertainty (Patrick et al. 2009); (b) *Meanness*: a  
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22 rather less benign manifestation of the same underlying fearless temperament including  
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24 underdeveloped empathy, interpersonal exploitativeness, devaluing of social attachments, and  
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26 antagonism, excitement seeking and deriving personal power from cruelty toward others; and (c)  
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28 *Disinhibition*, characterized by chronic problems with under-regulation of affect and behavior,  
29  
30 lack of foresight and planning, and an orientation to immediate gratification (Patrick et al.,  
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32 2009). Investigations of Triarchic Psychopathy to date most often use the Triarchic Psychopathy  
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34 Measure (TriPM; Patrick, 2010), a 58-item self-report instrument with three subscales, each  
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36 operationalizing one of the components of the Triarchic Model.  
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### 42 **Psychopathy Components and Social and Personal Adjustment**

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44 The development of self-report scales—particularly the Psychopathic Personality  
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46 Inventory-Revised (PPI-R]; Lilienfeld & Widows, 2005) and now the TriPM—has opened up  
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48 research on relationships between psychopathy components and other personality characteristics.  
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50 Studies of the TriPM with correctional or forensic health samples have related component scores  
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52 to impulsivity (Weidacker et al., 2017), empathy (Stanley et al., 2013), and aggression (Dongen  
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3 et al., 2017; Gray et al., 2019; Sellbom et al., 2018; Zabala-Baños et al., 2019). Taken together,  
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5 the core features of TriPM scales, especially Meanness and Disinhibition, suggest that people  
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7 with prominent psychopathy characteristics are likely to create difficulties for themselves and  
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9 those around them at best, and at worst, will inflict significant harm. Popular books such as  
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11 *Surrounded by Psychopaths* (Erikson, 2020), and *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of*  
12  
13 *the Psychopaths Among Us* (Hare, 1993) are replete with ideas for people who need help  
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15 managing the impacts of others' psychopathy in their lives. Yet research on the social and  
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17 personal impacts of psychopathy is sparse, with the most relevant studies emerging from work  
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19 settings. For example, people reporting higher self-centered impulsivity (on the PPI-R) were  
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21 rated by others as making a significantly less positive contribution to the workplace social  
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23 context (Schütte et al., 2018). Manager psychopathy has been associated with reduced affective  
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25 wellbeing, and decreased job satisfaction among employees (Boddy, 2014; Boddy & Taplin,  
26  
27 2016). And a recent paper on workplace coaching found that executive coaches working with  
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29 organizational leaders with perceived "dark triad" characteristics (i.e., subclinical narcissism,  
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31 Machiavellianism, and psychopathy) experienced more distress and anxiety about coaching and  
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33 were less successful in their coaching than with leaders with fewer of these characteristics,  
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35 (Diller et al., 2020).  
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42 Research on the social impact of psychopathy in criminal justice settings has yet to  
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44 emerge. For example, there appears to be no research on whether more psychopathic prisoners  
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46 affect the wellbeing or progress of less psychopathic prisoners when housed or in treatment  
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48 together, although it is plausible that they do. A recent study of substance abuse treatment with  
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50 military veterans found that people with higher TriPM Boldness, but surprisingly, not  
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3 Disinhibition or Meanness, were rated by peers as creating more stress for others in the treatment  
4 environment (Dargis et al., 2021).  
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8 It is also widely assumed that people with high scores on psychopathy components may  
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10 be aversive for rehabilitation staff to work with, and like other high-risk clients, they do typically  
11 bring a raft of challenging characteristics to treatment (Polaschek, 2014). For example, Wong  
12 and colleagues, using a model of psychopathy components based on the two-factor structure of  
13 the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R; Hare, 1991, 2003), have commented on the  
14 challenges of working with people high on psychopathy. In particular, they linked PCL Factor 1  
15 (interpersonal-affective) scores with treatment-interfering behavior “such as staff splitting  
16 (manipulation), lying and argumentativeness” (p. 338, Wong, et al. 2012. See also Wong &  
17 Hare, 2005). But how these characteristics or behaviors affect therapists, either personally or  
18 professionally has not been directly empirically investigated. Generalizing from workplace  
19 psychopathy research, such information may be important for several reasons; highly  
20 psychopathic clients may reduce therapists’ motivation to do their best work, reduce  
21 effectiveness in supporting reduction in recidivism, increase stress and anxiety, decrease job  
22 satisfaction, or even lead to cynicism or burnout. These responses in turn may negatively affect  
23 the client’s engagement and satisfaction (Dargis et al., 2021).  
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42 Research on the working alliance (Bordin, 1979)—a measure of the extent of the bond,  
43 and shared goals and tasks between staff and clients—suggests that PCL factor 1—the  
44 interpersonal and affective features of psychopathy—is associated with a poorer alliance at  
45 various points in the treatment process (Daly et al., 2020; Ross, 2008; Taft et al., 2004). Lower  
46 ratings of working alliance may also have a negative impact on therapist job satisfaction or  
47 wellbeing. But perhaps surprisingly, several studies have found no difference in therapy alliance  
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3 for high vs. low psychopathy offender clients, and even when they are lower, working alliances  
4 with people with high psychopathy scores were still good on average, whether rated from the  
5 therapist or client perspective (DeSorcy et al., 2020; Newman, 2020; Polaschek & Ross, 2010) .  
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10 There is also little research of direct relevance for understanding how psychopathy  
11 components in supervisees may have a bearing on correctional workers other than therapists,  
12 such as probation or parole officers and case managers. Studies have found that the extent to  
13 which parole or probation officers cultivate firm, fair, caring relationships with supervisees is  
14 predictive of recidivism (Kennealy et al., 2012; Polaschek, 2016a; Skeem et al., 2007). But is  
15 their ability to do so reduced by the impact of callous or aggressive interpersonal behavior from  
16 supervisees? Polaschek (2016a) using criminal risk level as a proxy for challenging client  
17 characteristics, found that higher independently estimated criminal risk level of the person on  
18 sentence did indeed predict poorer ratings by supervising probation officers of their own  
19 relationship behavior. It is not yet clear how these findings might relate to psychopathy.  
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33 Alongside the social impact, psychopathy characteristics have also been associated with  
34 indicators of personal adjustment, wellbeing and quality of life. For example, in one study, the  
35 parents of children with callous-unemotional traits in the absence of Conduct Disorder, gave  
36 lower ratings for their children's overall quality of life (Herpers et al, 2016). Longitudinal cohort  
37 research has also shown that people identified as life-course persistent offenders in their youth  
38 later showed higher levels of psychopathic traits (Moffitt et al., 1996), and importantly, by age  
39 26 showed poorer adjustment across a number of life domains, including mental and physical  
40 health indices, finances, employment and crime (Moffitt et al., 2002). Among the TriPM  
41 components, Disinhibition would appear to be the most likely candidate for an association with  
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3 wellbeing, given its conceptual and empirical roots in both internalizing and externalizing  
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5 psychopathology (Blonigen et al., 2005; Krueger, 1999a,b).  
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8 To conclude, knowledge of psychopathy characteristics, and a handful of relevant studies  
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10 together suggest that high scores on psychopathy scales will have negative associations with  
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12 important processes in the criminal justice system that support people in avoiding further  
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14 recidivism. We turn now to one of those important processes: reintegration into the community.  
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### 17 **Community Reintegration Processes and TriPM Psychopathy Components**

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19 Reducing recidivism overall is an important outcome for correctional systems; and for the  
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21 people in them, desistance—the process by which they begin to leave crime behind for  
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23 something better, or at least to reduce reoffending and contact with the criminal justice system  
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25 (Polaschek, 2019)—is the desired outcome. Successful reintegration or re-entry after time in  
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27 prison is an essential early step toward desistance (Polaschek, 2016b). Early in the re-entry  
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29 process, getting set up in the community with housing, social support, employment and sufficient  
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31 finances, achieving or maintaining physical and mental wellbeing, and developing a positive  
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33 supportive relationship with the supervising probation officer are important milestones. All of  
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35 these require, or benefit from the involvement of other people, including correctional staff and  
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37 family and friends.  
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43 Previous research on re-entry to the community has examined several types of  
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45 intermediate outcomes and whether they predict recidivism as a proxy for desistance. For  
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47 example, the quality of pre-release planning is predictive of short-term recidivism outcomes  
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49 (Dickson et al., 2013; Willis & Grace, 2008). More recently, research with the archive used in  
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51 this study has shown that two months after release, the quality of the external circumstances in  
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53 which parolees were living (e.g., levels and types of personal and community support,  
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3 accommodation, employment), and to a lesser extent subjective wellbeing—recent mental and  
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5 physical health, emotional experiences—were better in those who were free of convictions at 12  
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7 months post-release (Gwynne et al., 2020). Both successful external and internal circumstances  
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9 (subjective wellbeing) are likely to be dependent on the ability to solve re-entry problems, which  
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11 for most people will be aided with access to the emotional and practical resources of other  
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13 people. Finally, a study of the quality of the supervising probation officers' relationships with the  
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15 parolees in this cohort (Polaschek, 2016a) found that better relationships, rated two months after  
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17 release by both the probation officer and the parolee, were also associated with several 12-month  
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19 recidivism outcomes. But do TriPM psychopathy components affect the success or otherwise of  
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21 reintegration processes?  
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26 Non-forensic research on socially relevant correlates of Triarchic Psychopathy Model  
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28 components gives clues as to how reintegration may be affected by Triarchic Psychopathy. For  
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30 instance, with nonclinical samples, both Meanness and Disinhibition have been correlated  
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32 moderately with dispositional contempt (Garofalo et al., 2019), a characteristic that is damaging  
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34 to relationships (Melwani & Barsade, 2011). In fact, Meanness is composed of several negative  
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36 attributes, including hostility to others, antagonism, rebelliousness and a dismissive orientation to  
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38 interpersonal attachment (Patrick et al., 2012), all of which may discourage others from  
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40 providing support. Taken together these findings suggest Meanness may be harmful to  
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42 relationships, whether with social or professional supporters.  
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47 It is less clear how Boldness may affect reintegration processes. On the one hand, the  
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49 social facility, emotional resilience and stress immunity of Bold people may make them  
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51 attractive to work and live with, and give them the ability to develop well-resourced re-entry  
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53 circumstances. But alongside its adaptive characteristics, Boldness has been found to be  
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3 associated with social dysfunction (e.g., greater stress for peers in treatment, more rule-breaking;  
4 Dargis et al., 2021). These effects may also negatively affect relationships with probation  
5 officers. Bold people may seem resistant to their influence or may struggle with the somewhat  
6 subservient nature of being supervised on parole, which may impair relationship building, and  
7 lead to parole violations. Similarly, Bold people may be better leaders than help-seekers, which  
8 may also limit the voluntary involvement of supporters in their lives; leading to poorer life  
9 quality on parole.

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19 Finally, parolees are replete with Disinhibition characteristics, since several dynamic risk  
20 factors for recidivism are wrapped up in this component (e.g., impulsivity, poor emotional  
21 regulation, problematic drug and alcohol use; Bonta & Andrews, 2016). But despite the  
22 sometimes chaotic, unpredictable, and unreliable behavior of highly Disinhibited clients, New  
23 Zealand probation officers report that they cope well and work effectively with them as a matter  
24 of course (Norman et al., 2021). On the other hand, Disinhibited clients will probably have  
25 poorer scores on both aspects of quality of life on parole (external and subjective), given  
26 previous research on the quite numerous negative correlates of Disinhibition, including greater  
27 negative reactivity and substance use problems (e.g., Blonigen et al, 2005).

### 40 **The Present Study**

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42 This is primarily an exploratory study, given the relatively small body of directly relevant  
43 research. Our main research question was “for parolees at high risk of committing crimes  
44 including violence, are their Triarchic Psychopathy component scores associated with the quality  
45 of (a) probation officer relationships, and (b) life in the community, each measured two months  
46 after release; and (c) reconviction in the first 12 months following release? Based on the research  
47 above we hypothesized that both Boldness and Meanness would negatively predict probation  
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3 officers' ratings of relationship quality, but we did not expect to find any associations between  
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5 Disinhibition with regard to relationships between probation officers and parolees. We expected  
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7 that Disinhibition would predict poorer quality of life on parole, especially subjective wellbeing,  
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9 but did not expect parole quality of life to be predicted by either Boldness or Meanness.

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12 The TriPM's ability to predict recidivism per se is of secondary importance. Given the  
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14 volume of research on whether the PCL-R predicts recidivism, surprisingly few studies have  
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16 examined this question with the TriPM (Douglas et al., 2018). Spanish male prisoners who  
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18 recidivated were found to have higher Meanness and Disinhibition but not Boldness scores  
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20 compared to non-recidivists (Zabala-Baños et al., 2019)<sup>1</sup>. A recent study predicting new general  
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22 and violent criminal charges in Portuguese men in juvenile detention found that only  
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24 Disinhibition was predictive, and then only of any new charge (AUC = .59,  $p < .05$ , 95% CI = .52,  
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26 .67). Based on these findings, we predicted that Disinhibition, and perhaps Meanness would  
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28 predict reconversion.  
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33 Based on our own previous research with the archive used in this study, we expected that  
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35 the quality of both probation officer relationships and of life on parole (i.e., PEM subscale  
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37 ratings) would predict reconversion. Our final aim was to explore whether either of these  
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39 intermediate variables were also mediators in TriPM relationships with recidivism.  
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## 42 Method

### 43 Participants

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45 The data for the present study were taken from an archival database based on 300 men  
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47 serving prison sentences of two years or more, and identified as being at high risk of future  
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49 violence and other types of crime. They were recruited into the study while in prison, just prior  
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51 to re-entry into the community and were then followed up in the community over the following  
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3 months. About half of the men were graduates of an intensive cognitive-behavioral treatment  
4 program (HRSTU; Polaschek & Kilgour, 2013). The remainder were men eligible for these  
5 programs who, for various reasons such as insufficient time on sentence, or a desire to remain in  
6 a prison close to family, did not attend a HRSTU program prior to release. More than three-  
7 quarters of these men had undertaken some form of less intensive rehabilitative or educational  
8 program experience while in prison (see Polaschek et al. [2016] for more details about the  
9 archive and treatment program).

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12 The sample for this study comprised 284 men from this cohort who had sufficiently  
13 complete data for the chosen independent variables. Of these, 48 men who had been reconvicted  
14 for an offense committed within the first 60 days after release were excluded from subsequent  
15 analyses. Table 1 confirms the high-risk status of the sample, even for those who did not offend  
16 in the first 60 days, with a young age of first conviction, a mean of almost 70 previous  
17 convictions including 5 for violence, and results from two risk assessment instruments (the  
18 RoC\*RoI and the Violence Risk Scale; see below) supporting their high-risk status. More than  
19 half of the sample was reconvicted within 12 months of release, including almost half of those  
20 who survived the first 60 days officially offense-free. Differences between those who were  
21 detected for early offending and the remainder were surprisingly few. They had significantly  
22 higher Violence Risk Scale total scores, and were younger at parole, but did not differ on other  
23 important indices, including the TriPM. They did differ on the 4 intermediate variables  
24 (probation officer relationship quality, Parole Experiences Measure), although whether because  
25 of their offending, or due to other causes cannot be ascertained from these data.

## 51 **Measures**

### 52 ***Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM)***

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3 The Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM) is a 58-item self-report measure with three  
4 component scales: *Boldness* (resilient, dominant, socially assured; 19 items), *Meanness*  
5 (excitement-seeking, callous, hostile toward others; 19 items), and *Disinhibition* (irresponsible,  
6 impulsive, alienated; 20 items), consistent with the Patrick et al. (2009) Triarchic model of  
7 psychopathy. Participants rate each item between 1 “false” and 4 “true”, and the results are  
8 summed to yield the three corresponding component scores. Internal consistency for these scales  
9 is generally adequate or better (Sellbom et al., 2018), and for this sample ranged between  
10 acceptable and good: ( $\alpha=.70$  for Boldness, .87 for Meanness and .73 for Disinhibition). Previous  
11 research has also found typically that Meanness and Disinhibition are moderately to highly  
12 correlated with each other, but Boldness and Meanness correlate weakly and Boldness and  
13 Disinhibition are not correlated (Gray et al., 2019; Poy et al., 2014; Strickland et al., 2013).  
14 Results for this sample were consistent with this pattern: Boldness and Meanness  $r=.16$   
15 ( $p=.008$ ), Meanness and Disinhibition  $r=.36$  ( $p<.001$ ) and Boldness and Disinhibition  $r=-.10$   
16 ( $p=.11$ ).

### 35 ***Parole Experiences Measure (PEM)***

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37 A measure of the quality of life in the first two months after release was also developed  
38 for use with this archive. (Gwynne et al., 2020), based on information provided by participants  
39 and their supervision probation officer in separate interviews we conducted two months after  
40 release. The PEM comprises two subscales. The External Circumstances subscale was scored  
41 from information gathered in the interview schedule about accommodation, personal support,  
42 finances, antisocial associates, alcohol use, and drug use<sup>2</sup>. Two graduate students constructed a  
43 comprehensive coding scheme based on these sections. They rated each item on a 1 to 4 Likert  
44 scale with higher scores indicating better circumstances. Each participant’s own responses were  
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3 augmented from the parallel interview with their probation officer, with no missing data  
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5 substituted where responses were not available in either interview. A number of participants  
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7 were not able to be contacted for their two-month interviews, resulting in data for 167 men. Once  
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9 the rating scale was developed, the raters independently coded a random selection of 40  
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11 interviews. Linear weighted kappa coefficients for the degree of agreement between the raters on  
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13 each item was almost perfect: ranging from 0.82 to 1 (Landis & Koch, 1977). The remaining  
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15 interview protocols were coded by only one rater. The scale's internal reliability was acceptable  
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17 (Cronbach  $\alpha=0.82$ ).  
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21 The Subjective Wellbeing subscale items were taken directly from six items in the 2-  
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23 month parolee interview. During the interview each participant rated on a 6-point Likert scale his  
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25 mental health and physical health over the last two months, how he had been feeling overall and  
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27 how he was feeling on the day of the interview. The final two items summed how often in the  
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29 previous two months each participant reported experiencing each emotion on a list of positive  
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31 and negative emotions. Participants rated each emotion on a 3-point scale (1=not at all; 3= a lot).  
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33 Scores were summed and the negative emotions sum was then reverse coded so that higher total  
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35 scores reflected greater wellbeing. Internal reliability for this scale (Cronbach  $\alpha$ ) was .66.  
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39 Missing data were substituted for eight participants who had completed the 2-month  
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41 interview but had failed to answer just one relevant item used in the Subjective Wellbeing  
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43 subscale. In each case the mean score for the other items on that scale for that individual was  
44  
45 substituted. Because raw PEM item scores used several different metrics, items were  
46  
47 standardized for all analyses, and then averaged for each scale. For descriptive statistics for each  
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49 item and scale prior to standardization, see Gwynne et al. (2020).  
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### 52 53 ***Relationship Quality Scale (RQS)*** 54 55 56 57 58 59 60

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3 In another part of the 2-month follow-up interview, parolee-participants and supervising  
4 probation officers each independently completed a series of ratings of the probation officer's  
5 relationship behavior toward them. The items were drawn from a much longer scale developed to  
6 improve the assessment of the complex, multi-role relationships that probation officers are  
7 expected to have with their clients. The Dual Role Relationships Inventory-Revised (DRI-R;  
8 Skeem et al., 2007) combines traditional working alliance concepts with aspects of procedural  
9 justice into a measure of self-rated or supervisee-rated perceptions of the behavior of the  
10 supervising probation officer toward the supervisee. The original psychometric study of the DRI-  
11 R, based on data for people on probation with mandatory mental health treatment in a typical  
12 jurisdiction in the southwest of the US, developed and refined an instrument with 3 subscales:  
13 *Caring-fairness* (20 items, e.g., worded from the probation officer perspective: "I treat [my  
14 supervisee] fairly"), *Trust* (5 items, e.g., "[My supervisee] seems to feel like I am someone s/he  
15 can trust") and *Toughness* (5 items, e.g., [My supervisee] seems worried I am looking to punish  
16 him/her"). For the interviews in this project, we selected the 8 items from the Skeem et al. (2007)  
17 study with the highest factor loadings on their respective subscales: Caring-Fairness (4 items),  
18 Trust (2 items), and Toughness (2 items).

19 Polaschek (2016a) reported preliminary data from this archive, based on ratings for 254  
20 probation officers and 205 parolees ( $n=176$  cases with ratings from both). Internal reliability  
21 analyses showed that for the Probation Officer Version, one item had a very low item-total  
22 correlation; once removed the remaining 7 items achieved adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha=.84$ )  
23 Similarly, from the parolee ratings, 2 items were removed. The remaining 6-item scale had high  
24 internal consistency ( $\alpha=.94$ ). These 7- and 6-item versions respectively, were used in this study.

### 25 ***Reconviction data and Risk Assessment Instruments***

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3 Data on two risk assessments instruments were included in the descriptive statistics to  
4 illustrate the high-risk status of the sample. The *RoC\*RoI* was developed for use by the NZ  
5 Department of Corrections to estimate the probability of returning to prison for new offending in  
6 following five years. Scores range from 0 to 1 and are calculated by a computer algorithm based  
7 on age, and various offense history variables (Bakker, Riley & O'Malley, 1999). The Violence  
8 Risk Scale (VRS) comprises 6 static and 20 dynamic items that are rated by a trained assessor.  
9 Scores predict both risk of crime and risk of violence (Wong & Gordon, 2006). Scores over 50  
10 are considered to indicate a high risk of future violence; estimated risk is reported here only for  
11 sample description purposes. Reconviction data were extracted from the Department of  
12 Corrections' Integrated Offender Management System (IOMS) database. For each participant the  
13 first conviction for a new offense with an offense date in the first 12 months after release was  
14 dichotomously coded (1=reconviction, 0=none).  
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### 30 Procedure

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32 All data were collected after approval from the Victoria University of Wellington Human  
33 Ethics Committee. Data were collected across three time-points: (1) Pre-release data were  
34 obtained in a single meeting with consenting men, and from their files at the time they were  
35 recruited: usually a few days to several weeks prior to their actual release. Participants undertook  
36 a structured interview with one of the authors and completed several questionnaires, including  
37 the TriPM. We also completed the VRS at that time; (2) In New Zealand both parolees and  
38 people serving community sentences with a supervision component ("probation") are supervised  
39 by people referred to as "probation officers". Two months after release, we contacted each of the  
40 men through their probation officer and ascertained whether they consented to be part of the first  
41 follow-up research phase. The probation officer was also invited to take part. We conducted  
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3 telephone interviews with consenting men, and independently, their supervising probation  
4 officer. Parolee participants taking part were provided with a voucher to their time and effort.  
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6 PEM data came from these interviews; (3) Recidivism data were obtained from the Department  
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8 of Corrections for the twelve months after each participant left prison.  
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### 11 12 **Data Analysis Plan**

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14 After outlining descriptive data for the main variables in the study, we examined  
15 correlations between variables, especially between the TriPM component scores and the other  
16 variables. All initial descriptive analyses were undertaken with SPSS Version 27 for Mac. Then  
17 we conducted a series of path analyses to examine relationships between the variables. These  
18 analyses were conducted using MPlus 7 (Muthén & Muthén (2012-2015). Path analysis was  
19 chosen to maximise power and minimise the number of analyses conducted, given the number of  
20 the variables and the relatively small sample size. It also enabled us to model the data  
21 longitudinally based on the 3 distinct timepoints at which data were collected: just prior to  
22 release (TriPM), 2 months after release (relationship quality, PEM subscales) and recidivism. We  
23 planned to test 4 models. In each, the 3 TriPM scales were entered together as predictors of the  
24 various intermediate (Time 2) variables:  
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40 Model 1: Probation officer relationship quality ratings;

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42 Model 2: Parolee relationship quality ratings;

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44 Model 3: PEM External Circumstances, or

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46 Model 4: PEM Subjective Wellbeing,  
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49 with each of these four in turn predicting reconviction. Direct pathways between the three TriPM  
50 component scores and reconviction were also included (see Figure 1 for an example, based on  
51 Model 1).  
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## Results

For reference purposes, Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics for the TriPM scales, the intermediate variables (Relationship Quality; RQS, Parole Experiences Measure; PEM), and the proportion reconvicted within 12 months. The VRS mean rating is in the high range (50 and above ; Wong & Gordon, 2006) and the RoC\*RoI is also in the high-risk band (0.7 and above).

Table 2 reports correlations between variables. Turning first to the TriPM components, Boldness was negatively associated with Meanness, but otherwise was not associated with other variables. As hypothesized, Meanness was significantly associated with a poorer rating by the supervising probation officer of their relationship with the parolee. Also consistent with our hypotheses, Disinhibition was significantly associated with poorer subjective wellbeing on parole, but not with external experiences as hypothesized. No TriPM component ratings were associated with parolee perceptions of their Probation Officers' relationships. Disinhibition was the only TriPM scale that was significantly correlated with reconviction, along with both PEM scales and Probation Officer-related relationship quality, as hypothesized. All significant correlations were small to moderate at most; most were not significant.

Next we examined these associations longitudinally, and while controlling for intercorrelations between other variables. We also included direct pathways between the TriPM components and reconviction, to enable us to examine whether the correlation between Disinhibition and reconviction remained significant after controlling for the other variables.

The first of the four pathway models is depicted in Figure 1. It shows that, net all other associations in the model, people on parole who reported themselves to be meaner just prior to release had probation officers who rated their own behaviour toward their parolee more poorly. Neither Boldness nor Disinhibition was related to probation officer relationship quality ratings.

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3 Meanness and Boldness also did not predict reconviction, but Disinhibition was a significant  
4 predictor of recidivism, as was the quality of the probation officers' relationships with their  
5 parolees.  
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10 Table 3 summarises the statistics for the other 3 models. The structure of Model 2  
11 differed only in that the probation officers' ratings were replaced with the parolees' ratings of  
12 their probation officers' relationship behaviour. As before, Meanness ratings were significant  
13 predictors of parolees' relationship quality ratings. But parolees' ratings did not predict  
14 reconviction. The only predictor of reconviction was again Disinhibition.  
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21 Models 3 and 4 substituted one of the Parole Experiences Measure subscales for the  
22 relationship quality rating scales. In Model 3, as in Table 2, no TriPM scale predicted PEM  
23 external circumstances ratings, but both Disinhibition and PEM external circumstances were  
24 significant predictors of recidivism. Model 4 found that Disinhibition predicted PEM subjective  
25 wellbeing, but here it did not predict reconviction. PEM subjective wellbeing predicted  
26 reconviction.  
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### 35 Discussion

36 Overall the results of the path analyses were relatively consistent with predictions.  
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38 Prisoner self-ratings of TriPM meanness predicted poorer probation officer relationship quality  
39 two months later in the community, whether from the probation officer or parolee perspective.  
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41 But contrary to prediction, we found that Boldness was not associated with probation officers'  
42 ratings of their relationship quality. In fact Boldness did not predict any variable measured at a  
43 later timepoint in the analyses. As expected, higher ratings of Disinhibition predicted poorer  
44 scores for both subjective wellbeing in the following two months, and external circumstances  
45 (e.g., accommodation, finances, personal support). Meanness did not predict either. Finally, as  
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3 we have found in previous research, reconviction within 12 months of being paroled was  
4 predicted by probation officer-rated relationship quality, and by both scales in the Parole  
5 Experiences Measure. Unexpectedly, parolee ratings of probation officer relationship quality  
6 were not significantly predictive of recidivism. Disinhibition also directly predicted reconviction,  
7 but Meanness did not.

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10 Previous research with correctional and forensic samples has reported a wide range of  
11 scores on the TriPM subscales. Our scores appear to be high relative to most previous samples  
12 (e.g., Dargis, et al., 2021; Pauli et al., 2019; Wall et al., 2015; Weidacker et al., 2017), especially  
13 for Disinhibition where they are about twice the level reported for several samples, but similar to  
14 the Salcido et al., (2019) community re-entry sample. High levels of PCL-psychopathy are a  
15 feature of high-risk prisoner samples, a finding that is to be expected given that the PCL-R is  
16 widely used to predict criminal risk (Douglas et al., 2018). Our results are also consistent with  
17 research with an earlier sample of high risk New Zealand male prisoners, which found that on  
18 average they also obtained high scores on the PCL-SV ( $M=19.8$ ,  $SD=3.1$ ,  $mdn=20.0$ ; Polaschek,  
19 2008). But in contrast to the PCL scales, where scores are more directly based on criminal  
20 behavior and criminal lifestyle correlates, only the Disinhibition scale of the TriPM correlated  
21 with recidivism; it also continued to predict it directly in the multivariate models.

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24 Disinhibition then appears to be the most relevant of the TriPM components for  
25 community success, in that it predicts reconviction regardless of how good the relationship with  
26 the probation officer or the quality of the external circumstances in which parolees are living in  
27 the early weeks back in the community. But the Model 4 findings suggest that pre-release  
28 Disinhibition's relationship with recidivism is in part at least, due to its relationship to poorer  
29 subjective wellbeing ratings 2 months into life in the community. This finding is consistent with

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3 predictions based on the negative emotionality aspect of Disinhibition (Dotterer et al., 2017).

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5 This finding also runs somewhat contrary to research suggesting that subjective wellbeing is not  
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7 typically a predictor of recidivism (Bonta & Andrews, 2016). By contrast, our results suggested  
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9 that Meanness is the most important TriPM component for Probation Officer relationships,  
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11 especially from the Probation Officer perspective. We observed that Probation Officer ratings of  
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13 their relationship quality mediated between Meanness and reconviction, but parolee ratings,  
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15 though moderately correlated with those of the Probation Officer, did not predict recidivism.  
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19 Overall, most significant relationships involving the TriPM components were small in  
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21 magnitude, suggesting that TriPM psychopathy components are not as important in forecasting  
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23 community success in this population as other factors that have been included in previous  
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25 research, such as dynamic risk (Polaschek et al., 2016), treatment completion, or release plan  
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27 quality (Dickson et al., 2013). This observation could be viewed positively, since personality  
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29 characteristics are generally considered to be less malleable than these latter variables. The  
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31 absence of significant associations between Boldness and the other variables of interest here is  
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33 consistent with the ongoing debate about the relevance of Boldness in criminal justice and other  
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35 contexts (Berg et al., 2017; Miller et al., 2016).  
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40 Limitations of this research include the relatively small sample size, and the potential  
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42 attenuation of effects that may result from the narrow range of criminal risk characteristics  
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44 represented. We would like to have tested a more complex model of relationships between the  
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46 TriPM, other data collected prior to release and intermediate variables, but the size of the sample  
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48 precluded such modelling. Although longitudinal, the study timeline was also of relatively short  
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50 duration, with the third measurement timepoint being little more than 12 months after the first.  
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54 Patterns of association may take longer to emerge, especially given that just 2 months out of  
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3 prison, the reintegration variables are being measured at a time when most parolees are still in  
4 the relatively early stages of resettlement. The removal of about one-sixth of the sample for rapid  
5 reoffending also may be considered a limitation to generalizability, but the differences between  
6 these cases and the remainder of the sample were surprising few with regard to the demographic  
7 and criminal history variables listed in Table 1.  
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12 It might also be argued that the use of a self-report measure of psychopathy components  
13 is a limitation. Although there is a tendency for people to assume that people in prison are  
14 unreliable and disingenuous in regard to self-report, self-report measures of constructs  
15 empirically linked to recidivism have been found to predict recidivism (e.g., Walters, 2006) and  
16 a self-report measure of psychopathy predicted future criminal behavior in a sample of  
17 adolescents (Vitacco et al, 2014). Nevertheless, whether self-report or otherwise, using  
18 alternatives to the more usual measurements of psychopathy based on the PCL-R and its family  
19 members has the advantage of avoiding potential predictor-criterion contamination, or of  
20 providing at least better separation between psychopathic personality components and antisocial  
21 behavior, given the extent to which PCL item ratings may draw on criminal history file  
22 information.  
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41 There is considerable scope for future research in this area. For example, future  
42 investigations could examine (a) whether or how TriPM components influence the treatment  
43 process (c.f., Dargis et al., 2021, but with prisoners), including potential impacts on treatment  
44 change, and on therapists and other group treatment attendees (see also Lloyd et al., 2014); and  
45 (b) whether intensive treatment, which has been found to reduced recidivism in this sample,  
46 might also mitigate the impact of Meanness on probation officer relationships, or of  
47 Disinhibition on wellbeing, and recidivism. Examining whether TriPM ratings can be reduced by  
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3 treatment itself would also be worthwhile. For example, if Disinhibition, or its manifestation in  
4 behavior is changeable (e.g., in improved self-regulation) it would be a worthy intervention  
5 target for this population, given that average scores at release were high, at 73% of the maximum  
6 possible score, and it predicted reconviction.  
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12 There are several practical implications of this research. There has been a considerable  
13 investment in recent years in training probation officers to be more effective in their work with  
14 supervisees (Davies, 2019). Knowing that client Meanness may challenge probation officers'  
15 efforts to relate effectively, and that these efforts were predictors of client recidivism suggests  
16 that further investment in strategies to better support this aspect of practice, and research into its  
17 effectiveness would be valuable. It would also be useful to extend this work beyond relationship  
18 quality to look at whether other core correctional practices that have been found to predict  
19 positive client outcomes such as those derived from the Risk-Need-Responsivity Model (Bonta,  
20 et al. 2011) are (a) also challenged when working with Meaner clients, and (b) predictive of  
21 improved outcomes with Meaner clients when they are effectively deployed despite these  
22 challenges.  
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37 The links between Disinhibition and reconviction, even when the effects of probation  
38 officer relationships and quality of life are controlled for, suggest that Disinhibition  
39 characteristics may require more direct attention from probation officers who are seeking to  
40 support their clients in successful (e.g., recidivism-free) sentence completion. Overall, research  
41 on psychopathy components and the processes by which criminal justice systems seek to support  
42 desistance is in its infancy, and warrants more attention. Relatedly, though not considered here,  
43 our review suggests there is considerable scope for future TriPM research on the social effects on  
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those who work or live alongside—whether as staff, supporters, or residential peers—people with the features of psychopathy in the criminal justice system.

For Peer Review



### Notes

1. These results were taken from the text on p. 367 of this article. Table 1, which also reports these data, contains an error and thus indicates that Boldness and Meanness but not Disinhibition, were higher in recidivists. No length of follow-up for recidivism data was indicated.
2. Employment and Community Support were also included initially, but subsequently dropped due to lack of variance (i.e., almost all participants had no employment or community support).

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Table 1

Demographic, criminal history and psychological variable descriptive statistics for men with and without a conviction for offending within 60 days of release on parole

Variables	Officially offense-free 60 days after release		<i>t</i> ( <i>p</i> )
	Yes	No	
	<i>n</i> =236	<i>n</i> =48	
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Age at parole	32.6 (8.8)	29.0 (6.0)	3.6 (<.001)
Age first conviction	16.1 (2.0)	16.0 (1.7)	0.40 (.69)
Age first violent conviction <sup>a</sup> ( <i>n</i> =252)	19.0 (3.7)	18.2 (3.1)	.130 (.20)
Number previous convictions	68.4 (53.3)	72.8 (46.1)	0.53 (.59)
Number previous violent convictions	5.1 (4.6)	3.9 (3.8)	1.8 (.08)
Sentence length given <sup>b</sup> (years; <i>n</i> =271)	3.9 (2.7)	3.4 (2.4)	1.3 (.19)
Sentence length served (years)	4.2 (4.5)	3.4(2.6)	1.9 (.07)
Static reimprisonment risk ( <i>RoC*RoI</i> ) <sup>c</sup>	.7364 (.1124)	.7654(.0759)	1.7 (.09)
Violence Risk Scale total (pre-release; <i>n</i> =269)	51.6 (8.7)	55.9 (7.7)	3.1 (.002)
Triarchic Psychopathy Measure (TriPM)			
Boldness	52.8 (7.6)	54.9 (7.9)	1.7 (.08)
Meanness	37.5 (10.1)	38.8 (12.1)	0.79 (.43)
Disinhibition	58.2 (8.9)	59.0 (8.6)	0.59 (.55)
Relationship Quality			
Probation Officer rating ( <i>n</i> =234)	32.7 (4.9)	30.5 (4.6)	2.5 (.01)
Parolee rating ( <i>n</i> =191) <sup>e</sup>	30.1 (7.8)	24.3 (9.5)	3.4 (<.001)
Parole Experiences Measure <sup>f</sup>			
External Circumstances	0.05 (.56)	-.56 (.71)	3.9 (<.001)
Subjective Wellbeing	.02 (.72)	-.22 (.74)	1.5 (.13)



	%	
Ethnicity <sup>d</sup>		
NZ Māori	62.6	67.3
European/European NZ	30.6	29.4
Pasefika	2.0	7.2
Other	0.0	0.9
Reconviction at 12 months <sup>g</sup>	49.8	100

Notes. Unless otherwise noted, complete sample  $n=284$

<sup>a</sup>All participants had a history of violent acts, but a few had no convictions for violence.

<sup>b</sup>Excludes 13 men serving indefinite sentences

<sup>c</sup>Estimated probability at release of being returned to prison for a new conviction. See **Measures** for full description.

<sup>d</sup>The first ethnicity provided by participants during our interviews was used here. Pasefika includes Cook Island Māori, Samoan, Tongan and Fijian participants;  $X^2(3) = 2.3, (p = .51)$ .

<sup>e</sup>Ratings made by Probation Officers and participants on parole should not be compared directly. The Probation Officer rating is based on 7 items and the parolee participant rating has 6 items.

<sup>f</sup>Because rating scales differed across items, PEM items were first converted to standardized scores and then averaged. All analyses here use the mean score for the standardized items for the relevant scale (external circumstances, subjective wellbeing).

<sup>g</sup>For reconviction,  $X^2(1) = 32.2 (p < .001)$

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Table 2

Correlations (Pearson's *r*) between TriPM components, intermediate variables and reconviction

	TriPM Components			Parole Experiences		Relationship Quality	
	Boldness	Meanness	Disinhibition	External Circ's	Subjective Wellbeing	Probation Officer -rated	Parolee-rated
Meanness	.16**						
Disinhibition	-.09	.36**					
PEM external circumstances	.06	-.14	-.09				
PEM subjective wellbeing	-.01	-.05	-.17*	.37**			
PO-rated Relationship	-.11	-.22**	-.04	.33**	.15		
Parolee-rated Relationship	-.10	-.12	.04	.32**	.35**	.51**	
Reconviction	.02	.02	.13*	-.34**	-.19*	-.13*	-.08

\**p*<.05; \*\**p*<.01.

Table 3

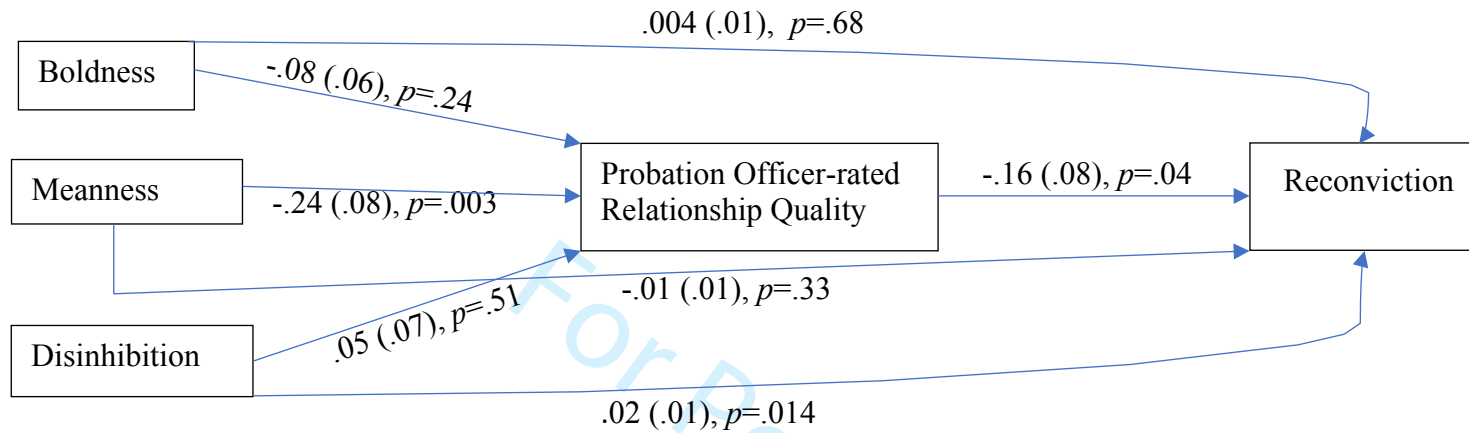
Path analyses, Models 1-4: TriPM, and Relationship Quality/PEM Predicting Reconviction

Standardised coefficients (standard errors) and statistical significance ( <i>p</i> ) by pathway							
Intermediate variable	Boldness=>	Meanness=>	Disinhib=>	Rel'p/PEM =>	Boldness=>	Meanness=>	Disinhib=>
	Rel'p/PEM	Rel'p/PEM	Rel'p/PEM	Reconviction	Reconviction	Reconviction	Reconviction
Probation Officer-rated relationship quality <sup>a</sup>	-.08 (.06) <i>p</i> =.24	-.24 (.08) <i>p</i> =.003	.05 (.07) <i>p</i> =.51	-.16 (.08) <i>p</i> =.04	.004 (.01) <i>p</i> =.68	-.01 (.01) <i>p</i> =.33	.02 (.01) <i>p</i> =.014
Parolee-rated relationship quality	-.08 (.07) <i>p</i> =.27	-.15 (.07) <i>p</i> =.03	.08 (.08) <i>p</i> =.31	-.11 (.09) <i>p</i> =.21	-.11 (.09) <i>p</i> =.21	-.01, (.01) <i>p</i> =.47	.02 (.01) <i>p</i> =.017
PEM external circumstances	.06 (.08) <i>p</i> =.47	-.14 (.08) <i>p</i> =.10	-.03 (.08) <i>p</i> =.47	-.44 (.09) <i>p</i> <.001	.01 (.01) <i>p</i> =.33	.01 (.01) <i>p</i> =.21	.02 (.01) <i>p</i> =.03
PEM subjective wellbeing	-.04 (.08) <i>p</i> =.62	.02 (.09) <i>p</i> =.89	-.17 (.08) <i>p</i> =.03	-.22 (.09) <i>p</i> =.014	.01 (.01) <i>p</i> =.64	-.004 (.01) <i>p</i> =.64	.02 (.01) <i>p</i> =.07

<sup>a</sup>This line of the table is duplicated in Figure 1, to assist with interpretation of the remainder of the models in this table.

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For Peer Review

**Figure 1***Model 1: TriPM scales, Probation Officer Relationship Quality and Reconviction*

*Note.* Numbers reported are standardized coefficients (standard errors), statistical significance ( $p$ )  
 See Table 3 for a text version of this model and models 2 – 4.