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# Reducing Substance Abuse Stigma in Employment Application

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# REDUCING SUBSTANCE ABUSE STIGMA IN EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION

by

TIMOTHY CURRAN

(Under the Direction of Thresa Yancey)

## ABSTRACT

A history of substance use and having a history of legal charges can be a barrier to employment. Available research shows individuals with a criminal history of substance related charges have greater difficulty obtaining employment due to the presence of substance abuse stigma and criminal history stigma. Research also shows that employers with higher levels of fundamentalism and conservatism are more likely to negatively evaluate applicants with a criminal history of substance charges. Furthermore, available research demonstrates employers in rural areas are more likely to deny employment to an individual with a legal history of substance charges based upon higher rates of familiarity within the community. Stigma research shows personal contact with a stigmatized population can reduce stigma. With this in mind, this study set out to determine if changing the response on the legal history section of an employment application would have an effect on mock employer's evaluations of job applications. In order to examine this, 458 participants were randomly assigned to read an employment application in one of three conditions. The only difference in the applications was the legal history section, which varied as "none," "possession of a controlled substance," or "will discuss." Participants also completed measures of substance use stigma, conservatism, and fundamentalism. Further, participants' geographic region (rural vs. non-rural) was examined. Results showed the only significant predictor of not granting an interview was the presence of a legal charge. The findings

demonstrated listing 'will discuss' on the legal history section reduces the chances of obtaining an interview. Implications of the current study indicate that personal values or rural status should not be a main focus of intervention when trying to reduce stigma for individuals with a legal history of substance charges. Limitations of the study include lack of a robust manipulation check and limited risk in granting an interview. Future studies should focus on research designs that incorporate a limited number of available interview opportunities, and examine whether other legal charges would have similar effects in employment application.

INDEX WORDS: Stigma, Substance use, Employment, Rural, Fundamentalism, Conservativism

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Statement of the Problem

Substance abuse is a widespread problem with long lasting consequences. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA; 2013), an estimated 23.9 million people over the age of 12 were classified as having a Substance Use Disorder in 2012. It is likely additional persons with substance abuse disorders went unidentified. Of these individuals, SAMHSA (2013) identified the highest rates of substance abuse among individuals between 18 to 25 years old.

Drug and alcohol treatment is one of the most commonly identified methods for discontinuing the use of substances. Of the 23.9 million individuals identified as having a substance use disorder in 2012, 2.5 million received treatment (SAMHSA, 2013). Treatment for substance use disorders can involve behavioral interventions, medication management, or a combination of the two (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2012). Completion of substance use treatment is linked to improved health outcomes and decreased involvement with the criminal justice system (Cao, Marsh, Shin, & Andrews, 2011; Garnick et al., 2014).

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM; 2015) provides a comprehensive definition for substance dependence: addiction is defined as a disease affecting brain circuitry related to rewards, motivation, and memory. The ASAM (2015) definition notes dysfunction in brain circuitry “leads to characteristic biological, psychological, social and spiritual manifestations” (para. 1). Someone who is in active addiction is characterized by the inability to consistently abstain from substance use, experiencing craving for substances, having diminished behavioral control, being unable to recognize serious problems related to behavior and relationships, and experiencing inappropriate emotional responses (ASAM, 2015). Recovery is

defined by ASAM (2015) as the action taken by an individual to address aforementioned areas affected by the disease of addiction. Recovery is most commonly associated with abstinence, which is the discontinuation of the use and pursuit of substances (ASAM, 2015).

Persons who use substances are a stigmatized population (Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005). Stigma is often defined as the reduction of an individual's human qualities based upon his or her involvement with a negative social category (Goffman, 1963). Individuals in recovery continue to be associated with individuals who actively use substances, which can be problematic. A stigmatized individual may be viewed as flawed in significant ways (Luoma, O'Hair, Kohlenberg, Hayes, & Fletcher, 2010). Stigma can lead to discrimination which limits individuals when seeking employment (Link, 1987; Penn & Martin, 1998; Penn, Ritchie, Francis, Combs, & Martin, 2002), attaining housing (Luoma et al., 2010; Page, 1983), building social relationships (Perlick et al., 2001), developing positive self-esteem (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Link, Struening, Neese-Todd, Asmussen, & Phelan, 2002; Wright, Gronfein, & Owens, 2000), and maintaining quality of life (Luoma et al., 2010; Rosenfield, 1997). When discrimination has a negative impact on the ability to gain employment, it creates carryover effects related to other areas. The inability to obtain employment results in a lack of finances thwarting attainment of adequate housing. In addition, unemployment contributes to low self-esteem (Chen, Marks, & Bersani, 1994). Low self-esteem inhibits new social relationships and may damage existing relationships (Sciangula & Morry, 2009). All of these factors contribute to lower quality of life. While stigma affects each of these areas distinctly, it is possible problems are compounded by the inability to gain adequate employment.

In general, stigma falls into three distinct categories, including: enacted, perceived, and self-stigma (Luoma et al., 2010). Enacted stigma is the direct bias against persons based upon

their involvement with a particular group, perceived stigma refers to how members of a stigmatized group perceive the attitudes of the general population about their group, and self-stigma involves an individual's personal thoughts and feelings about being a part of a stigmatized group (Luoma et al., 2010). With regard to employment, individuals in recovery are likely subjected to enacted stigma. Once potential employers are aware of the history of substance abuse, through reporting of legal consequences related to substance use on employment applications, they may attribute stereotyped traits of an active user of substances onto the individual in recovery, placing the applicant at a disadvantage (Van Olphen, Eliason, Freudenberg, & Barnes, 2009). While the other forms of stigma likely play a part in the limiting of employment options, enacted stigma is the one element most outside the applicant's control.

Heijnders and Van Der Meij (2006) outline five levels or strategies often employed in stigma reduction: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Organizational/Institutional, Community, and Governmental/Structural. The authors note most research relates to stigma reduction strategies with few studies on the efficacy of the overarching frameworks used to reduce stigma. Heijnders and Van Der Meij (2006) note most effective approaches are individualized (intrapersonal/interpersonal) and community approaches, and suggest it is beneficial to start at the individualized (e.g., promoting activities where a person has the opportunity to interact directly with a stigmatized population) and community (e.g., conducting community outreach at public events promoting stigma education) levels and have affected individuals (i.e., persons who received stigma-reduction education) assist in the production of reduction programs at other levels. While there are effective efforts at reducing stigma related to substance use disorders at an individual level (e.g., group-based interventions and vocational counseling), there appears to be little effect on the stigmatizing attitudes of the general population (Livingston, Milne, Fang, &

Amari, 2012). This is likely due to a number of factors. The ‘War on Drugs’ was first initiated by President Nixon in 1971 (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). This campaign was continued by First Lady Nancy Regan in the 1980s which portrayed individuals with Substance Use Disorders negatively, as an ‘enemy’ (Mackey-Kallis & Hahn, 1991). The ‘Just say No’ slogan further solidified the public’s opinion that addicted individuals lack the will power or moral fortitude to stop using drugs (Mackey-Kallis & Hahn, 1991). While the message is now altered, it is possible employers making hiring decisions are influenced by these messages and these beliefs may still resonate (Mackey-Kallis & Hahn, 1991). However, it is also possible the main barrier to an Organizational/Institutional strategy is the lack of willing participants to support reform. As noted, substance use carries stigma. Therefore, many people with previous difficulties with substances may choose to keep their struggles private.

Addiction is so wide spread it has likely touched everyone in some form or fashion. Many people have a friend or family member who struggled with substance dependence at some point in his or her life (McCully & Williams, 2013). However, to speak out about substance abuse stigma could highlight the fact the individual is associated with substance dependence, and this could be considered a weakness (McCully & Williams, 2013). The reluctance to speak out about substance abuse stigma due to fear of association may be why there is very little movement to systematically reduce the stigma (McCully & Williams, 2013).

Since large scale approaches to reduce substance use stigma (e.g., mass media campaigns, directly targeted educational campaigns) will be costly and may take long periods of time to be implemented, other methods to reduce stigma related to substance use need to be explored. Research shows stigma can be reduced through contact with a stigmatized group, although the effects may diminish after time (Stubbs, 2014). However, this opportunity is not

provided in a job seeking scenario if the applicant is unable to obtain an interview. Individuals in recovery often have a criminal history, given the illegal nature of substance use (Van Olphen et al., 2009). When a potential employer views an application including a substance-related charge, it is likely the stigma related to those who use substances is activated (Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005). By activating the stereotype, the potential employer associates negative attributes with the potential applicant, which prevents the applicant from moving on to the interview stage of the hiring process. Therefore, alternative methods are needed to provide the recovery applicant an opportunity to physically meet with the potential employer. Physical contact with the employer may help reduce stigma associated with substance abuse (Stubbs, 2014). However, if the process is halted before contact can occur, there is little chance the individual will have the opportunity to reduce stigma through personal contact.

An individualized approach may be more efficacious at reducing enacted stigma on a level meaningful and beneficial to someone in recovery. An individualized approach is when a stigmatized population focuses on the reduction of experienced stigma by trying to reduce the stigmatizing attitudes of those they encounter (Heijnders & Van Der Meij, 2006). While this approach is not ideal because it places the burden of responsibility on the stigmatized group, it may be an opportunity for a meaningful reduction in enacted stigma. Since the stigma is first activated by the job application, this is the logical place to attempt to intervene.

We proposed changing the language in the “legal history” section of an employment application will influence a potential employer’s decision to grant an interview. Specifically, by changing the legal history information to “will discuss,” as opposed to listing a specific charge, an applicant may prevent stigma related to substance use from activating in the potential employer. However, stigma associated with legal history would remain because the applicant is

required to submit an honest application. It is possible potential employers may envision legal charges which are considered more serious (e.g., rape, murder). Therefore, it was unknown whether changing the language on the “legal history” section of the application would help or hinder an applicant with a substance use legal history to move to the next stage of the hiring process where there is an opportunity to reduce enacted stigma through personal contact.

In addition to enacted stigma, it was hypothesized other prohibitive factors were at play for a recovery applicant with a legal history. Fundamentalist religious groups often take a very firm stance against substance abuse (Grasmick, Cochran, Bursik, & Kimpel, 1993). Therefore, the presence of legal charges related to substance use was hypothesized to have an influence on how an applicant is perceived dependent upon the presence of fundamentalist beliefs held by the employer. This stance may present as an additional barrier toward obtaining an interview. This study included measures to determine if a fundamentalist stance is a prohibitive factor.

Furthermore, individuals with very conservative political views tend to be more rigid regarding substance use policy (e.g., harsher sentences for substance use charges; Grasmick et al., 1993). It was hypothesized the presence of a legal charge related to substance use may impact the way an employer with conservative political views rates the applicant. These views may be additional factors preventing an applicant from progressing through the hiring process. This study included measures to examine whether or not strong conservative views are a prohibitive factor for job applicants in recovery with a legal history.

Finally, people in the rural south are often described as having strong fundamentalist and conservative views (Herek, 2002). It would be beneficial to understand whether this is accurate, and if it creates difficulty for a recovery applicant. In other words, if those with fundamentalist beliefs and conservative views are found to be more stigmatizing toward individuals in recovery,



and these factors are found multiplied in rural areas, it may be very difficult for recovery applicants in a rural area to obtain a job interview. In addition, research shows high levels of familiarity within the rural community often make it difficult for individuals with a previous criminal history to gain employment within a rural community (Wodhal, 2006). This study sought to examine if listing a substance use charge (vs. an unknown legal charge) makes it more difficult to obtain an interview and additionally asked about geographic location of participants to examine rural vs. non-rural differences.

In summary, the current study examined whether or not a change in language on an application for employment makes an interview more likely for an applicant with substance related legal charges (“recovery applicant”). Furthermore, we explored whether fundamentalist beliefs and conservative views serve as barriers to gaining interviews for recovery applicants. Finally, we examined whether these factors are more prevalent in rural populations, and if obtaining an interview in a rural area would be less likely for a recovery applicant.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Previous Substance Use Population

According to the SAMHSA (2013), in 2012 there were approximately 23.9 million Americans aged 12 or older who had a Substance Use Disorder. Illicit drug users are defined as individuals who used any illicit substance (marijuana/hashish, heroin, cocaine (including crack), inhalants, hallucinogens, or prescription-type psychotherapeutics (tranquilizers, pain relievers, stimulants, and sedatives) used nonmedically) during the month prior to being surveyed (SAMHSA, 2013). . Kessler et al. (1994) found substance use disorders were the most highly prevalent disorder in a large-scale epidemiologic study examining prevalence of mental health disorders.

In 2012, 2.5 million Americans received treatment in inpatient hospital, drug or alcohol rehabilitation center, or mental health center programs (SAMHSA, 2013). The use of illegal substances often carries legal ramifications, with 1,552,432 individuals arrested for drug abuse violations in 2012 (United States Department of Justice [USDOJ], 2013). In 2012 there were 99,426 individuals in federal prisons and 222,738 individuals in state prisons for drug related charges (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Of the individuals serving time in state prisons, 55,013 had convictions solely related to possession of a controlled substance (Carson & Golinelli, 2013). Not all individuals arrested for drug-related charges are incarcerated. Many receive sentences of parole or probation in lieu of prison time, with approximately 985,694 people on probation and approximately 280,882 people on parole for drug-related charges (Bonczar & Maruschak, 2013). While these numbers reflect active involvement with the legal system in 2012, many more people have completed their sentences but still have a criminal record. Although the exact number of people who received drug related charges over the past two decades is impossible to

determine due to lack of records, one unconfirmed report indicated it is approximately 15 to 20 million Americans (Smith, 2007). The National Employment Law Project (n.d.), reports 70 million people in the United States have an arrest or conviction record. In addition, Mumola and Karberg (2006) reported 17% of state and 18% of federal inmates committed their crimes to obtain money for drugs.

### **Substance Use and Mental Illness Stigma**

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5, 2013) identifies substance use disorders as mental illnesses. Identifying substance use disorders as mental illnesses is not recent, with evidence of classification tracing back to the first edition of the DSM in 1952. According to the DSM-5 (2013), the essential feature of disorders related to substance abuse is the continued use of a substance despite problematic symptoms which are cognitive, behavioral, and physiological in nature and directly related to the use of substances. There are ten classes of substances listed in the DSM-5: alcohol, caffeine, cannabis, hallucinogens, inhalants, opioids, sedatives, stimulants, tobacco, and other drugs.

It is known persons with mental illness experience stigma (Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005; McGinty, Goldman, Pescosolido, & Barry, 2015; Whitley & Campbell, 2014). Stigmatization is linked with high degrees of marginalization and discrimination, and can contribute to suicidality (Corrigan, Markowitz, & Watson, 2004; Rüsçh, Zlati, Black, & Thornicroft, 2014; Thornicroft, Mehta, Brohan, & Kassam, 2010). Individuals who experience stigma related to mental illness often have difficulty obtaining employment providing a living wage and finding accommodations which are suitable to the individual's needs (Corrigan, Larson, Watson, Boyle, & Barr, 2006). Corrigan and Kleinlein (2005) outline a model which illustrates how the factors often accompanying mental illness (i.e., symptoms, skill deficits, abnormal appearance, and

diagnostic labels) serve as signals to the general public to activate stigma, which may lead to discrimination.

While Luoma et al. (2010) characterize stigma as including three distinct categories (i.e., enacted, perceived, and self-stigma), Corrigan and Kleinlein (2005) outline a more general framework for stigma. Corrigan and Kleinlein (2005) state stigma falls into two general categories: public stigma and self-stigma. Self-stigma involves negative internalized beliefs about the self as a result of being part of a stigmatized group, while public stigma is negative beliefs about a stigmatized group held by the majority population. Corrigan and Kleinlein (2005) identify three basic components involved in both categories: stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. Stereotypes are defined as beliefs about overgeneralized individuals based upon group categorization (Augoustinos, Ahrens, & Innes, 1994; Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993). The use of stereotypes allows individuals to categorize information about others with cognitive efficiency. While this may be a cognitively efficient way to categorize information, it can result in negative consequences. The use of stereotypes can often lead to prejudice. Prejudice is the affective response to the endorsement of a stereotype (Corrigan, Backs, Green, Diwan, & Penn, 2001). The feeling associated with the response (i.e., prejudice) can be either positive or negative. Prejudice can lead to discrimination, which is an action by an individual based on prejudiced feelings (Corrigan et al., 2001). Regarding the mentally ill, common stereotyped beliefs include they are unpredictable, dangerous, violent, incompetent, and self-destructive (Klin & Lemish, 2008). While stereotypical beliefs are essentially internal cognitions, they can lead to behavioral reactions in the form of discrimination (Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005; Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Prejudice toward the mentally ill can have many manifestations, but is often seen as anger or fear (Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005). When prejudiced feelings are based in

anger, discrimination can result where traditional forms of health care may be withheld or passed off to the criminal justice system (Corrigan, 2000; Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005). When fear is involved, employers may avoid hiring individuals with mental illness to avoid having contact (Corrigan et al., 2001; Corrigan & Kleinlein, 2005). Corrigan and Watson (2002) note individuals with mental illness have two primary goals negatively impacted by public stigma: the ability to obtain sustainable employment and the ability to obtain suitable housing conditions.

Individuals with substance use disorders are often treated as criminals or lacking morals rather than as individuals with legitimate health concerns, even when they have no criminal history (Radcliffe & Stevens, 2008; Room, 2005). The use of illegal substances is often perceived as being more negative compared to the use of legal substances (Cunningham, Sogell, Freedman, & Sobell, 1994; Room, 2005). Stigma related to substance use is exacerbated by the criminalization of substance use, which increases discrimination and marginalization of those who use substances (Ahern, Stuber, & Galea, 2007). Additionally, because individuals with substance use disorders are perceived as having control over their condition, they are likely to be blamed for their illness (Albrecht, Walker, & Levy, 1982; Corrigan, Kuwabara, & O'Shaughnessy, 2009; Schomerus et al., 2011).

According to Rasinski, Woll, and Cooke (2005) substance use disorders can exist without the presence of other psychiatric disorders, which makes them more likely to be perceived by the public not as medical in nature, but as a choice of the individual. Due to this perception, theories of stigmatization place substance use disorders as having more likelihood of stigmatization compared to other psychiatric/mental health disorders (Corrigan et al., 2001; Weiner, 1995), which was demonstrated in a study by Link, Phelan, Stueve, and Pescosolido (1999). Individuals with substance use disorders were perceived more negatively than individuals with different

psychiatric disorders. However, substance use disorders often co-occur with other psychiatric disorders and are associated with crime and violence (Rasinski, Woll, & Cooke, 2005). The presence of other disorders and criminal history increases experienced stigma (Rasinski et al., 2005). The stigma experienced by individuals who use substances often leads to discrimination which results in limited access to resources and inadequate access to treatment (Rasinski et al., 2005; White, 1998).

Self-stigma, as well as external stigma, negatively affects individuals who use substances (Rasinski et al., 2005). According to Mead (1934), theories of symbolic interaction maintain identity is constructed from an individual's place, situation, and role within society in addition to the way someone is perceived and treated by others. The negative view from society toward an individual who uses substances can lead that individual to have a negative view of him or herself (Steele, 1997). Because the stigmatizing societal views of addiction were likely established within an individual before the beginning of substance use, they are more likely to lead to internalization of the stigma (Rasinski et al., 2005; Williams, 1976). The self-stigma experienced by individuals who use substances can lead to feelings of unworthiness, low self-esteem, decreased confidence, loss of hope, guilt, questioning of fundamental goals, and difficulty identifying in roles other than a person who uses substances (Corrigan & Lundin, 2001).

Stigma toward individuals with substance use disorders is pervasive and is even found among physicians treating individuals with these disorders (Institute of Medicine, Committee on Crossing the Quality Chasm, 2006). A study by Meltzer et al. (2013) measured the attitudes of 128 internal medicine residents toward individuals with substance use disorders. The researchers compared attitudes toward patients with substance use disorders to those with heartburn or pneumonia and found residents demonstrated less regard for patients with alcoholism and

dependence on narcotic pain medication compared to patients with pneumonia and heartburn. Furthermore, Van Boekel, Brouwers, Van Weeghel, and Garretsen (2013) conducted a meta-analysis investigating stigma among health professionals toward patients with substance use disorders. The analysis included 28 studies conducted in five countries. Results indicate health professionals' attitudes toward substance use patients were generally negative, with reduced feelings of empowerment in the patients, and were correlated with less successful treatment outcomes. These studies demonstrate substance abuse stigma is not only present within the general population, but also among professionals trained to treat those with these disorders.

### **Legal History Stigma**

The use of many types of substances is illegal and often results in legal ramifications. In addition to stigma related to substance use, there is stigma related to the presence of legal charges which results in additional challenges related to gaining employment for those with a history of substance use (Turney, Lee, & Comfort, 2013).

Pager (2003) notes the presence of a criminal history can result in social exclusion and discrimination. He describes a criminal history as a "negative credential," which distinctly differentiates someone from the rest of a social group. According to Pager (2003), this negative credential can provide a seemingly more legitimate basis for differentiation. Pager (2003) investigated the effect of a criminal history on employment applications submitted to a variety of entry-level positions using Caucasian and African American applicants. The study gathered qualitative and quantitative data from 350 employers and measured the number of callbacks received by the applicants. A significant effect for criminal record was found such that the presence of a criminal record resulted in fewer callbacks from employers. There was also a significant difference for race, where African American applicants received fewer callbacks than

Caucasians. In fact, African Americans without criminal histories received fewer callbacks than Caucasian applicants with criminal histories. This study demonstrates that not only does a criminal history stigma significantly impact the ability to progress in the application process, but additional factors can have a multiplicative effect on discriminatory events. This suggests the presence of a legal charge related to substance use may doubly impact the employer's willingness to grant an interview, due to the combined stigma related to substance use and legal history.

To determine if criminal record discrimination was linked with psychological distress, Turney, Lee, and Comfort (2013) conducted a study using a sample of men who were recently released from prison. The researchers found individuals who experienced discrimination as a result of possessing a criminal record were significantly more likely to report psychological distress compared to a control sample. In addition, the authors found racial discrimination was independent of criminal record discrimination and both had a negative impact on psychological distress. These findings serve to further illustrate criminal history stigma is an independent form of stigma, but can be compounded with other forms of stigma, such as racial or mental health stigma, to create a difficult environment for the recipient.

In another study involving legal history stigma, Hirschfield and Piquero (2010) conducted a multivariate analysis to examine public attitudes toward individuals with criminal histories. They collected data using a randomized telephone survey across four states with 2,282 participants and examined public attitudes regarding individuals with criminal histories, as well as factors reducing stigmatizing attitudes toward individuals with criminal histories. Results indicate a significant number of participants endorsed stereotypes of individuals with criminal histories as being dangerous and dishonest. Exposure to someone with a criminal history,



however, reduced negative views of individuals with a criminal history. Furthermore, participants' confidence in the court system impacted their attitudes toward individuals with a criminal history; specifically, participants who had trust in the judicial system held more negative views toward ex-offenders. In addition, participants who identified as conservative had increased negative attitudes toward individuals with a criminal history, while participants who identified as having liberal political views held less negative views toward individuals with a criminal history. The study by Hirschfield and Piquero (2010) helped to identify factors influencing the severity of stigma received by an individual with a criminal history; however, further study is needed to identify methods an individual with a criminal history can use to reduce stigma in order to decrease discrimination.

### **Unemployment**

The Bureau of Labor defines unemployment as an individual who is not currently employed, is seeking a job, and is available to work (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), the rate of unemployment in the United States as of March 2015 was 5.5%. These statistics are derived from a random sample of 60,000 households, which contain approximately 110,000 individuals. Each month a quarter of the sample is changed, and a single household is not measured again for over four months. Since 1947, the unemployment rate for a person over 16 years of age has ranged from 2.9 in 1953 to 9.7 in 1982 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). The rate of unemployment was as high as 9.6 most recently in 2010 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). These figures illustrate that unemployment is problematic for a portion of the population on a consistent basis and creates a competitive environment for job seekers.

Individuals who are unemployed often experience high amounts of stress (McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005). Research demonstrates people who are unemployed often report experiencing decreased happiness and lower life satisfaction than those who are employed (Clark, Georgellis, & Sanfey, 2001; Kassenboehmer & Haisken-DeNew, 2009). Unemployment increases mental distress and decreases overall health, and more extended times of unemployment can lead to higher risk of mental distress and health concerns (Backhans & Hemmingsson, 2012). Unemployment leads to increased stress due to job competition in individuals without a legal history, and stress increases more with the presence of a legal history.

A study conducted in Germany by Stavrova, Schlosser, and Baumert (2014) indicated an individual's personal perspective can impact his or her sense of well-being when unemployed. The authors examined justice sensitivity and perceived levels of well-being among the unemployed. They discuss two types of justice sensitivity: perpetrator and victim (Stavrova et al., 2014). According to the authors, a victim perspective is when an individual perceives an injustice is being imposed upon him or her and a perpetrator perspective is having the view that one is taking unfair advantage of the social systems in place for unemployment assistance. Individuals with high perpetrator sensitivity can experience strong levels of self-directed guilt when they are in situations that could cause injustice for others. Individuals who have high victim sensitivity have strong negative emotions when they perceive they are receiving an unfair, undeserved advantage compared to others. The authors analyzed self-report data collected from 400 unemployed participants, which identified the participants' justice perspective and level of well-being. Having a more sensitive perpetrator perspective was linked with lower levels of well-being compared to a less sensitive perpetrator perspective. There was no significant difference in the victim perspective, but there was a consistently low sense of well-being with those who

identified with the victim perspective. Although this study was not conducted in the United States and uses self-report measures, it has relevance to the current study. A criminal record is often perceived as a barrier to employment (Pager, 2003). This perceived barrier could create a victim perspective that leads to an overall reduction in well-being, regardless of sensitivity to victimization.

According to Chen, Marks, and Bersani (1994), individuals who are recurrently unemployed have the lowest overall subjective well-being. The researchers interviewed 464 participants currently in the workforce or seeking employment, collecting data on work history and overall life satisfaction. Frequent periods of unemployment led to lower perceived job security, which also led to lower subjective well-being. Individuals with a criminal record are subject to frequent employment rejections due to discrimination experienced as a result of their criminal record (Pager, 2003). Without a method to progress in the employment application process, individuals with criminal records are likely to receive multiple employment rejections, in turn leading to an overall low subjective well-being (Chen et al., 1994).

### **Hiring Decisions**

Different types of jobs often require different types of skill sets. When evaluating a potential employee, an employer needs to gauge whether or not the applicant is appropriate for the job. Many entry level positions only require a general level of intellect and the ability to learn new basic concepts and procedures (Tews, Stafford, & Tracey, 2011). Additionally, many entry-level positions require some interaction with the public; therefore, personality factors are often considered in hiring decisions (Tews et al., 2011). According to Tews, Stafford, and Tracey (2011) employers do not focus solely on the best attributes needed for an employment position, as evidenced by the high rate of turnover and variable customer service.

The strongest predictor of employee performance is General Mental Ability (GMA) (Gottfredson, 2004; Ree, Earles, & Teachout 1994). GMA includes general cognitive abilities such as the ability to reason, solve problems, think abstractly, understand complex ideas, plan, and learn quickly (Gottfredson, 1997). Tews et al. (2011) suggest managers rely more on personality or other characteristics to fill job positions, rather than examining the GMA of a potential applicant. Therefore, although an applicant may possess a high GMA, the decision for employment may be based on other factors.

A meta-analysis by Hurtz and Donovan (2000) indicated personality factors have a positive impact on job performance, but are not the strongest predictors of job performance. The researchers examined studies incorporating the Big Five personality model which includes five personality dimensions: agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experience (Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; John, Donahue, & Kentle, 1991; John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). Hurtz and Donovan (2000) found conscientiousness demonstrated the strongest positive relationship with performance for customer service occupations, followed by agreeableness and emotional stability. Conscientiousness is highly valued in sales jobs, followed by extraversion and emotional stability.

In order to investigate what is involved in hiring decisions, Tews et al. (2011) examined how GMA and personality dimensions factor into hospitality managers' decisions to hire. The authors measured responses from 104 managers of casual-themed restaurants within the United States. The managers rated 36 applications from servers with combined levels of GMA and personality dimensions. They found that GMA was not as highly valued compared to personality dimensions. More specifically, the managers rated agreeableness more highly than any other dimension, which is not the strongest predictor of performance (Hurtz & Donovan, 2000).

Although a limitation of this study was the lack of generalizability to other areas of employment, individuals with previous substance abuse and legal histories often seek employment in the service industry (Larsen, 1994).

To determine individuals' perceptions regarding the personality traits of persons who use substances, Curran et al. (2014) examined college students' perceptions of those who use substance's personality traits using a Big Five personality measure. Students rated people who use substances highest on neuroticism, followed by extraversion and openness. The students rated people who use substances lowest on conscientiousness, followed by agreeableness. Based on these findings, individuals with histories of substance use would have difficulty being perceived as good applicants. In fact, a meta-analysis by Kotov, Gamez, Schmidt, and Watson (2010) found individuals with active substance use disorders to be highest on neuroticism, followed by openness, extraversion, and agreeableness. Conscientiousness was found to be the lowest trait for individuals with active substance use disorders. What is lacking from the research is the personality traits of individuals who are in recovery from substance use disorders. It is unclear if these traits persist when not in active addiction. If the personality trait most predictive of strong work performance is conscientiousness, the applicant with a substance use history would be placed at a disadvantage based upon his or her perceived level of conscientiousness. Further, if the applicant was rated on agreeableness, as was found to be the case with hospitality managers (Tews et al., 2011), those with a substance abuse history would continue to be at a disadvantage. Therefore, there is a high likelihood applicants with a history of substance use will not be seriously considered for a service position, even if they actually possess a favorable GMA and/or high levels of conscientiousness and agreeableness.

These studies help to illustrate that, although applicants with a history of substance use may possess a high GMA or have personality characteristics correlated with positive job performance, they may not be considered due to the general perception of individuals who abuse substances personality traits. The biased perception of individuals' who abuse substances personality traits make it difficult for an applicant with a history of substance abuse to obtain an interview or find employment.

Hiring decisions involving someone with a history of mental illness and involvement in the legal justice system face additional complications due to stigma about both groups (Hayward & Bright, 1997; Overton & Medina, 2008). A study by Torrey, Kennard, Eslinger, Lamb, and Pavale (2010) found among the mentally ill, 40% had been incarcerated at some point in time. Mental health stigma can persist throughout the lifespan, and a criminal record can create long-term stigma with lifelong implications (Link, Cullen, Frank, & Wozniak, 1987; Link & Phelan, 2001; Homant & Kennedy, 1982; Pager, 2003).

Batastini, Bolanos and Morgan (2014) investigated how stigma limits job opportunities for those with a mental illness, criminal history, or both. The researchers used a college sample of 456 participants, stating the sample had external validity because these individuals may be involved with hiring processes in future employment. Through survey methods, the authors measured the participants' willingness to hire the applicant, followed by their likelihood to seriously consider the applicant. In addition, some of the participants received a manipulation (i.e., psychoeducational instruction) highlighting some benefits of considering these types of applicants. Participants rated applicants with a history of mental illness and criminal background as the least acceptable applicants for employment. However, when the participants were provided psychoeducational instruction, the ratings were not significantly different compared to

ratings of applicants without histories of mental illness or criminal charges. This study provides a clear example of how information provided to an employer reduces the effects of stigma regarding both mental illness and criminal history. While it is promising that the effects of stigma can be reduced for job seekers with mental health and legal histories, the authors did not offer ways for a job seeker to reduce experienced stigma on an individual level.

Building rapport with a potential employer can make it easier for an applicant with a criminal history to find employment (Pager, Western, & Sugie, 2009). A study by Swanson, Langfitt-Reese, and Bond (2012) found many employers were willing to hire someone with a criminal history. The researchers found most employers in their study had hired at least one individual with a criminal history, and applicants were more likely to be hired if they made face-to-face contact with the employer. All of these studies suggest contact, education, and rapport are important when someone with a history of mental illness or a legal history is seeking employment. What is missing from the literature are ways an applicant can increase his or her chance of achieving this face-to-face interaction.

### **“Ban the Box”**

The National Employment Law Project (NELP) began a movement to institute a policy which would delay inquiries regarding convictions until later in the hiring process (NELP, n.d.). The policy would allow employers to evaluate applications based upon qualifications first, without the stigma associated with having a criminal record (NELP, 2015). NELP (2015) notes the felony conviction box on applications discourages people with a criminal record to apply for a position, and narrows the employers' applicant pool by eliminating applicants with felony convictions. As previously discussed, having a criminal record reduces the likelihood of having an employer make further inquiries regarding the applicant by 50% (Pager, 2003).

According to NELP (2015), between 57 and 65 billion dollars in losses occur annually due to the reduced output of services and goods. These services and goods could be provided by individuals with criminal histories, which could additionally increase tax contributions (Schmitt & Warner, 2011). In addition, employment is significantly associated with a reduction in recidivism (Berg & Huebner, 2011). NELP (2015) is currently advocating for “Fair Chance Policies,” which allows an employer to review the qualifications of an applicant before making a determination based upon a criminal history. This policy has been adopted in 15 states and over 100 counties and cities in the United States (Rodriguez, 2015). NELP (2015) has termed the movement “Ban the Box” because it seeks to eliminate the question about legal history on the initial application.

The national movement undertaken by NELP highlights the underlying problems inherent in reporting a criminal history on an employment application. While this movement is making great strides, it is not yet established nationwide. Many areas have not adopted the fair chance policies, and many individuals with a criminal history are discriminated against for employment due to stigma (NELP, 2015). The literature is lacking regarding strategies individuals with criminal histories can use to reduce public stigma in a way that enables them to progress to a more personal level of the hiring process. The current study investigated whether other methods (i.e., changing description in legal history section) are useful for individuals with a criminal history in moving further in the application process in areas where fair chance policies are not adopted.

### **Other Influences in Hiring**

Other influences are also present in hiring decisions. While the presence of a substance use or legal history creates barriers for employment, influences such as the size of the



community, religiosity, and political beliefs may factor into an employer's decision to grant an applicant an interview based only upon their application. The following sections highlight these three additional influences contributing to an employer's decision to grant an interview to an applicant with a criminal history related to substance use.

**Rural populations.** Rural areas are typically defined by the population count within a defined geographical location (Murray & Keller, 1991). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), an urban area is defined as an area with a population of 50,000 or more. Rural areas are defined as those not included in urban areas (Census Bureau, 2011). There have been other methods to operationally define rural areas, such as proximity to an urban center combined with a population count denoting degrees of rurality, but for the purposes of this study the U.S. Census Bureau definition was used (Wodahl, 2006). Rural communities have unique features not observed in urban areas (Wodahl, 2006). Individuals in rural communities do not have the same level of access to public and private services compared to their urban counterparts (Murray & Keller, 1991; Robertson, 1997). There tends to be less economic diversity in rural areas, and many residents tend to have low-paying, service related positions, which are often dependent on seasonal tourism activities (Ghelfi & McGranahan, 2004; Gibbs, Kusmin, & Cromartie, 2004; Whitener & McGranahan, 2003). In addition, rural communities typically possess a high level of acquaintance density, defined as the average number of people within a given community known to its inhabitants, and can create an environment where privacy is difficult to maintain (Freudenburg, 1986; Wodhal, 2006).

Wodhal (2006) notes offenders of the criminal justice system may experience difficulty reintegrating into a rural community due to the degree of familiarity among rural community residents. Stigma related to offenders can make it difficult to find employment (Travis, Solomon,

& Waul, 2001). Although criminal background checks are not always conducted, which would allow offenders to obtain employment without the stigma attached to their criminal history, this may not be possible in rural communities due to the familiarity of the population (Lewis, 2003; Wodhal, 2006). In addition, research shows smaller businesses are among the least likely to be willing to hire ex-offenders of the criminal justice system (Holzer, Raphael, & Stoll, 2002). Furthermore, Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2002) found employers in the service sector were least likely to hire ex-offenders due to the necessity for interaction with customers. Because most available jobs in rural communities are found within the service sector, this may create an especially difficult environment for an individual with a criminal history to obtain employment (Gibbs et al., 2004; Wodhal, 2006). This is problematic given that, according to the perceptions of mental health professionals, substance abuse is the second most prevalent mental health problem in rural and frontier areas, surpassed only by depression (McDonald, Curtis-Schaeffer, Theiler, & Howard, 2014). Therefore, given jobs in rural areas are more difficult to obtain by individuals who have previous criminal charges, it is possible individuals who reside in rural areas may be less likely to consider granting an interview to someone with a previous criminal history.

**Fundamentalism.** The term fundamentalist is used to describe a portion of evangelical Protestants within the United States who believe in a strict adherence to traditional articles of Christian faith (McLatchie & Draguns, 1984). Strict fundamentalist beliefs may be used to rationalize hatred or prejudice, due to the belief certain behaviors are considered a sin as opposed to mental illness (Koenig & Larson, 2001). A study by Kendler, Gardner and Prescott (1997) found increased fundamentalism was related to reduced risk of alcoholism and nicotine dependence. Additional studies found similar results (Brizer, 1993; Mathew, Georgi, Wilson, &

Mathew, 1996). While these studies highlight how the presence of fundamentalist beliefs have reduced risk associated with substance use, they have not identified how these beliefs may influence those with fundamental beliefs regarding positive feelings toward individuals who have had difficulty with substances in the past.

Research demonstrates fundamentalist beliefs are preventative as a source of spiritual strength and can be used within the treatment of addiction (Arnold, Avants, Margolin, & Marcotte, 2002). Although some studies highlight positive aspects of fundamentalist beliefs, other studies indicate fundamentalist beliefs impact how an individual interacts with someone with a legal history. Having fundamentalist beliefs is associated with the imposition of harsher punishments in the criminal justice system (Grasmick, et al., 1993). However, there are no studies regarding whether or not holding strong fundamentalist beliefs impacts how an individual rates a job applicant with a history of substance use or a criminal record. If strong fundamentalist beliefs lead individuals to believe substance use/criminal history is the result of a personal weakness, they may be less likely to hire an applicant compared to someone without strong fundamentalist beliefs. Further investigation is needed to determine whether fundamentalist beliefs of a potential employer pose a barrier to an applicant with a criminal history associated with substance abuse.

**Conservatism.** Conservatism is a political doctrine stating the existing political policies should be embraced, while those policies that threaten to substantially change current policies should be met with mistrust and skepticism (Rescher, 2015). Politicians of the conservative party have a history of being skeptical of individuals with a history of substance use (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993). In 1971, President Nixon instituted what he termed a ‘war on drugs’ (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). Drug use had become symbolic with social upheaval, and political

rebellion and Nixon's 'war on drugs' was his attempt to stifle this movement (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). The laws regarding substance possession became more punitive and substance use became more criminalized (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). The laws regarding substance use relaxed somewhat during President Carter's administration, but were tightened again upon the election of President Regan (Drug Policy Alliance, 2015). During the Reagan-Bush administration in the 1980s, President Reagan and others affiliated with the conservative party suggested substance abuse was due to the moral failing of individuals (Drug Abuse Policy Office, 1982; Drug Abuse Policy Office, 1984; Office of National Drug Control Strategy, 1989; Office of National Drug Control Strategy, 1990). The problem of substance abuse was highlighted as a social problem due to an inherent defect of the person using substance rather than an issue of mental health (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993).

Researchers during this time period who adhered to the claim substance abuse was a result of internal defects in character were less than objective when investigating this claim. Rhodes and Jason (1988) reviewed substance abuse programs at the time and noted interventions were focused on individual factors (such as personality), as opposed to ecological variables, suggesting the problem of substance use was attributed to internal personality variables of the individual. In addition, Humphries and Rappaport (1993) note during a literature search conducted between January, 1981 and March, 1992, only three references were found regarding substance abuse and ecological factors, while 170 were found investigating substance abuse and personality. Finally, the focus on the genetic component to addiction was highlighted during this time period (Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993). Plomin and Rende (1991) noted much of the behavioral genetics research in the 1970s previously met with skepticism was accepted during the 1980s despite shortcomings in method.

Those with conservative views have frequently been in favor of incarceration as a consequence for substance abuse (Bullington, 2004; Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993). The 'war on drugs' led by the conservative party, suggests individuals with a history of substance use are part of the criminal element, which resulted in a drastic increase in the prison population (Dagan & Teles, 2014). Juries composed of those with conservative political views impose harsher sentences on offenders compared to offenders tried by judges (Bowers & Waltman, 1993; Levine, 1983). Conservatism is correlated with a more punitive stance for substance related charges (Langworthy & Whitehead, 1986; Lee & Rasinski, 2006). If conservative views tend to lead to harsher criminal sentences, and individuals who abuse substances are perceived as being a part of the criminal element, it is possible conservative views may influence an individual's decision on granting an interview to someone with a history of substance use.

### **Summary**

Stigma has negative effects on mental and physical health of individuals considered to be in a marginalized group (Corrigan et al., 2004; Rüsçh et al., 2014; Thonicroft et al., 2010). Individuals who experience stigma encounter limitations on housing, employment, and access to services (Corrigan et al., 2006; Stuart, 2008). Stigma is shown to limit opportunities toward those stigmatized populations, and for those associated with multiple stigmatized groups, this effect is multiplicative (Pager, 2003).

Individuals with a history of substance abuse are a stigmatized group (Ahern et al., 2007). These individuals are often perceived to have a condition resulting from the individual's personality characteristics (Corrigan et al., 2009). Individuals with a history of substance abuse are frequently described as having weak moral character compared to the general population (Radcliffe & Stevens, 2008; Room, 2005). In addition, stigma related to substance abuse can

manifest within the individual (i.e., perceived and self-stigma), as well as from outside sources (i.e., enacted, prejudice, discrimination; Stavrova et al., 2014). As a result of overarching beliefs held by the population at large, an individual who uses substances may internalize the values of the culture, which can create a sense of shame within the individual (Stavrova et al., 2014). In addition, the individual may be actively discriminated against by the community at large (Corrigan et al., 2004).

Involvement with the criminal justice system also results in stigmatization (Turney et al., 2013). Possessing a criminal history frequently prevents individuals from obtaining gainful employment (Pager, 2003). In addition, individuals with criminal histories experience significantly fewer opportunities for employment, compared with individuals with no criminal history (Pager, 2003). The literature shows a large number of individuals have experiences with the criminal justice system as a result of a substance use disorder (Bonczar & Maruschak, 2013). Employers use a history of legal charges as one way to narrow their applicant pool (NELP, 2015).

Hiring decisions also do not favor an applicant with a criminal substance use history (Batastini et al., 2014). The literature shows that although many employers would be willing to employ an individual with a criminal history if they met with the applicant face-to-face, many applicants are not given the opportunity due to how potential employers narrow the applicant pool (Pager et al., 2009).

The literature suggests individuals with a criminal history related to substance use will experience considerable difficulty when attempting to obtain employment due to multiplicative effects of stigma (Corrigan et al., 2006; Stuart, 2008). For individuals from cultural minority populations these difficulties will be further increased (Pager, 2003). Methods have been

identified to increase the potential for an individual with a criminal history of substance use to obtain employment, but these methods require personal interaction with the employer which is not possible if these applicants are eliminated during the application review process (Pager et al., 2009; NELP, 2015).

Other factors may impact a potential employer's decision to employ someone with a criminal history related to substance use. There are differences identified with regard to employment in rural areas (Ghelfi & McGranahan, 2004; Gibbs et al., 2004). Rural areas are more likely to have job openings in service related industries and employers who are less willing to hire someone with a criminal history (Whitener & McGranahan, 2003). Given these factors, there may be differences in the way individuals from rural populations rate an applicant with a criminal history related to substance use compared to those from non-rural areas.

Furthermore, fundamentalism is associated with a negative view of those who use substances (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). An individual with fundamentalist beliefs tends to ascribe the history of substance use to low moral character traits (Koenig & Larson, 2001). This can influence a potential employer's willingness to hire someone with a history of substance use. Finally, conservatism is associated with a more punitive stance toward criminal offenses, and has a long-standing tradition of criminalizing those who use substances (Langworthy & Whitehead, 1986; Lee & Rasinski, 2006). It is possible potential employers with strong conservative and fundamentalist beliefs will be less likely to hire someone with a criminal history related to substance use than those with less conservative and fundamentalist beliefs.

## **Hypotheses**

For the current study, the following were hypothesized:

1. It was predicted participants who viewed applications with “no legal history” would be more likely to grant an interview to the applicant, compared to participants who viewed applications which listed the presence of a legal history (i.e., will discuss, possession of a controlled substance) based upon previous research (Pager, 2003). Since no previous studies have explored using alternate terminology in the criminal history section (i.e., will discuss), it was unknown if participants would be more or less likely to grant an interview compared to the condition with the presence of a legal charge (i.e., possession of a controlled substance) and no specific predictions were made regarding the participant’s decision for those applications.
  - a. Participants who read the applications with “no legal history” were predicted to have higher confidence in their decision compared to participants who read the applications with the presence of a legal history.
  - b. Participants who read the applications with “no legal history” were predicted to be more likely to grant an interview compared to participants who read the applications with the presence of a legal history. As previously discussed, the outcome of the “will discuss” condition compared to the “possession of a controlled substance” condition served an exploratory role.
2. Additionally, the current study examined if participants’ decision to grant an interview to an individual with a criminal history was influenced by whether or not the participant previously lived in a rural community. It was hypothesized that participants who lived in rural areas would be less likely to grant an interview to an applicant with a criminal history compared to participants from non-rural areas, based



- upon the literature demonstrating it is more difficult for individuals with a criminal history to obtain employment in rural areas (Lewis, 2003; Wodhal, 2006).
3. In addition, it was predicted the decision to grant an interview is influenced by level of conservatism, fundamentalism, and substance abuse stigma. It was predicted that participants who report higher levels of conservatism, fundamentalism, or substance abuse stigma would be less likely to grant an interview to those reporting a legal history (i.e., “will discuss” or “possession of a controlled substance”). As previously discussed, it was unknown what type of charge the participant thought of when reading the “will discuss” condition; therefore, no specific predictions were made as to whether or not the level of conservatism, fundamentalism, or substance abuse stigma reported by the participant will make it more or less likely to grant an interview to an applicant who lists “will discuss” on the application compared to “possession of a controlled substance.”

## CHAPTER 3: METHOD

### Participants

Data was collected from 493 students at a large regional university. After initial examination of the data, 35 participants were removed due to not completing several measures in the study. There were 458 (183 men – 40.0%; 274 women – 59.8%) participants included in the study. The mean age of the participants was 20.04 ( $SD = 3.19$ ), with most (94.6%) between the ages of 18 and 24. Participants' current year in school included freshman (146; 32.0%), sophomore (160; 34.9%), junior (86; 18.8%), senior (60; 13.1%), and post-baccalaureate (6; 1.3%). Most participants identified as Caucasian (253; 55.2%), 123 as African American (27%), 34 as Hispanic/Latino (7.4%), 15 as Native American (3.3%), 11 as Asian (2.4%), nine as Middle Eastern (2.0%), and five as Pacific Islander (1.1%). There were eight participants (1.7%) who did not answer questions regarding ethnicity. Most participants (346; 75.5%) reported growing up in rural areas, 95 participants (20.7%) reported being from non-rural areas, and 17 participants (3.7%) either did not provide the information or were originally from another country.

### Procedure

Participants were provided a link to an online survey site. Following consent procedures, participants read a short description of an open job position (see Appendix A). Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three job applications. All applications were identical with the exception of the legal section; the legal background was one of three conditions: "Possession of a controlled substance," "will discuss," or "none." Participants then reported whether or not they would grant an interview to the applicant whose application they read and what in the application led them to the decision (see Appendix B). In addition, the participants rated their confidence in

their choice on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Not at all confident” to “Completely confident.” Furthermore, the participants rated their likelihood to grant an interview based upon the application on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “Not at all likely” to “Extremely likely.” Next, participants completed the remaining questionnaires, provided demographic information, and were debriefed. During the debriefing, information on free mental health services was provided in the event the study elicited any distress for the participant.

### **Materials**

This study used a generic manager job description and a generic job application. The job description was identified through a Google search using the keywords “manager job description.” The sample used was from Monster.com, which was available through the public website. The job application was identified through a Google search using the keywords “job application.” A sample was used from the About.com public website page at <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/jobappsamples/a/employmentapp.htm>. The applications were identical with the exception of the legal history section (see Appendices C through E).

### **Measures**

#### *Community Attitudes Toward Substance Abusers Scale (CASA; Hayes et al., 2004).*

The CASA measures stigmatizing attitudes toward those who abuse substances. The CASA is a 40-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., strongly disagree to strongly agree) developed by Hayes et al. (2004) by modifying the Community Attitudes Toward the Mentally Ill scale (CAMI) created by Taylor and Dear (1981). The analyses for the current study only used the total score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of stigmatization toward those who abuse substances. Some sample questions from the CASA include, “Drug and alcohol addiction is an

illness like any other,” and “Drug addicts and alcoholics need the same kind of control and discipline as a young child.” Cronbach’s alpha for the current sample was .88.

***Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RRF; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004).*** The RRF is a 12-item measure to assess religious fundamentalism on a 9-point Likert scale ranging from ‘Very Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Very Strongly Agree’ (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). The RRF has alpha reliability coefficients of .91 to .92, and good construct validity (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Cronbach’s alpha for the current sample was .93. Sample scale items include, “No single book of religious teachings contains all intrinsic, fundamental truths about life,” and “To lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion.” The items are calculated into a total score, where higher scores reflect higher rates of religious fundamentalism.

***Political Conservatism Scale (PCS; Napier & Jost, 2008).*** The PCS measures political orientation using a two-item questionnaire on a 7-point Likert scale. The items include “What is your political ideology?” and “What is your political party affiliation?” The scale ranges from ‘Strong Liberal/Democrat’ to ‘Strong Conservative/Republican.’ The means of the two items are calculated to produce a total score. The scale items have high intercorrelations ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ). Cronbach’s alpha for the current sample was .85.

***Demographic questionnaire.*** Participants provided demographic information including age, race, gender, year in school, and current major (see appendix F). Additionally, participants listed the zip code of their home town and identified if the area is non-rural (i.e., population of 50,000 or more) or rural (i.e., population of less than 50,000; Census Bureau, 2011). This information enabled further analysis to determine the relationship between rurality and stigmatizing attitudes.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

### Preliminary Analyses

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was conducted to assess the relationships among the predictor variables. The Spearman's rank-order correlation was chosen instead of a Pearson's correlation because the rural variable was ordinal (i.e., rural or urban), and not continuous. Preliminary analyses showed the relationships between the variables to be monotonic, as assessed by visual inspection of scatterplots. There was a small positive correlation between the CASA and the RRF,  $r_s(456) = 0.171, p < .001$ . This small positive correlation demonstrated higher levels of religious fundamentalism were correlated with higher levels of substance use stigma, consistent with the hypothesis. There was a small positive correlation between the CASA and the PCS,  $r_s(456) = 0.202, p < .001$ . This small positive correlation was consistent with the hypothesis that higher levels of conservatism would be correlated with higher levels of stigmatization. This finding demonstrated the higher levels of conservatism were correlated with higher levels of substance use stigmatization. There was a moderate positive correlation between the RRF and the PCS,  $r_s(456) = 0.336, p < .001$ . The correlations between rural areas and the other variables were not significant (see Table 1).

A series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine whether random assignment was successful. A one-way Welch ANOVA was conducted to determine if the mean scores on the CASA were significantly different for participants in the three levels of the independent variable. There were no outliers, as assessed by boxplot, and the data were normally distributed for each group as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p > .05$ ). However, there was heterogeneity of variances as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ( $p = .04$ ). The CASA score decreased from the "no legal history" ( $M = 109.83, SD = 14.60$ ), to "possession of a controlled

substance” ( $M = 106.76$ ,  $SD = 17.82$ ), to “will discuss” ( $M = 105.83$ ,  $SD = 17.58$ ) conditions respectively. The differences in the CASA scores between the groups were not statistically significant, Welch’s  $F(2, 299.973) = 2.717$ ,  $p = .07$ . A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the scores on the RRF were significantly different for participants in the three levels of the independent variable. There were no outliers, as assessed by boxplot, and the data were normally distributed for each group as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p > .05$ ). There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances ( $p = .76$ ). The RRF score increased from the “will discuss” ( $M = 59.95$ ,  $SD = 22.62$ ), to “possession of a controlled substance” ( $M = 61.45$ ,  $SD = 23.18$ ), to “no legal history” ( $M = 62.77$ ,  $SD = 23.58$ ) conditions respectively, but the differences between the conditions were not statistically significant,  $F(2, 455) = 0.576$ ,  $p = .56$ . A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the scores on the PCS were significantly different for participants in the three levels of the independent variable. There were no outliers, as assessed by boxplot, and the data were normally distributed for each group as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk test ( $p > .05$ ). There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances ( $p = .43$ ). The PCS score increased from the “no legal history” ( $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 1.70$ ), to “will discuss” ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ), to “possession of a controlled substance” ( $M = 4.37$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ) conditions respectively, but the differences between the conditions were not statistically significant,  $F(2, 455) = 0.471$ ,  $p = .63$ . As no statistically significant differences were found across conditions, we can assume random assignment was successful.

### **Decision to Grant Interview by Application Condition**

To determine if condition was related to decision to grant an interview, a 2 (yes, no) x 3 (no legal history, possession of a controlled substance, will discuss) Chi-square test of

homogeneity was performed to determine if there were significant differences between binomial proportions of three independent groups on the dichotomous dependent variable. There were 458 participants who were randomly assigned to view either an application with “no legal history,” “possession of a controlled substance,” or “will discuss.” There were two participants (1.3%) in the “no legal history” condition, ten participants (6.8%) in the “possession of a controlled substance” condition, and 15 participants in the “will discuss” condition who said “no” to granting an interview to the applicant. There was a statistical difference in the proportions,  $p = .01$  (see Table 2). Post hoc analysis involved pairwise comparisons using the z-test of two proportions with a Bonferroni correction. The proportion of participants in the no legal charge condition who responded “no” to an interview was significantly lower than participants in the “will discuss” condition,  $p < .05$ . The proportion of participants responding “no” to an interview in the no legal charge and listed charge conditions was not statistically significant,  $p > .05$ . The proportion of participants responding “no” to an interview in the “possession of a controlled substance” and “will discuss” conditions was not statistically significant,  $p > .05$ .

A one-way ANOVA compared the effect of the levels of the application condition on the participant’s likelihood to grant an interview. The participants’ responses were recorded on a 7-point Likert scale which demonstrated the participants’ overall likelihood to grant an interview. Higher scores indicated a higher likelihood of granting an interview. Preliminary evaluation of the data indicated the likelihood variable violated assumptions of normality as assessed by Levene’s Statistic ( $p < .005$ ), and were negatively skewed. The likelihood variable was reflected with a square root transformation, which transformed the data to meet the normality requirements (Levene’s Statistic  $p = .54$ ). Therefore, the reflection of the data is considered during interpretation of the results. After the transformation a higher likelihood to grant an

interview is reflected by lower values. The likelihood to grant an interview was statistically significant by levels of the application condition,  $F(2, 455) = 13.131, p < .001$ , Partial Eta Squared = 0.055. Post-hoc comparisons using Gabriel's procedure demonstrated the likelihood to grant an interview was significantly higher for the "no legal charge" condition ( $M = 1.33, SD = 0.31$ ), compared to the "possession of a controlled substance" ( $M = 1.51, SD = 0.37, p < .001$ ) and "will discuss" conditions ( $M = 1.50, SD = 0.36, p < .001$ ), a mean increase of 0.18 ( $SE = 0.04$ ) and 0.17 ( $SE = 0.04$ ), respectively. No other pairwise comparisons were significant.

**Confidence to grant interview.** A one-way ANOVA compared the effect of the levels of the application condition on participant's confidence in their decision. This response was recorded on a 7-point Likert scale which measured the overall confidence in their decision to either grant, or not grant an interview. To incorporate all participants the confidence score was multiplied by -1 if the participant responded "no," and multiplied by 1 if they responded "yes" to the decision to grant an interview. The confidence in the decision to grant an interview was statistically significant by different level of application condition,  $F(2, 455) = 11.091, p < .001$ , Partial Eta Squared = .046. Post-hoc comparisons using Gabriel's procedure demonstrated the confidence in the decision was significantly higher for the "no legal charge" condition ( $M = 5.62, SD = 1.53$ ), compared to the "possession of a controlled substance" ( $M = 4.70, SD = 2.59, p < .001$ ) and "will discuss" conditions ( $M = 4.37, SD = 2.88, p < .001$ ), a mean increase of 0.92 ( $SE = 0.28$ ) and 1.25 ( $SE = 0.27$ ), respectively. No other pairwise comparisons were significant.

### **Rural Participants Decision With Presence of Legal Charge**

A chi-square test for association was conducted between decision to grant an interview and rural area (see Table 3). The test was selected to determine whether the two categorical variables were associated or statistically independent. Only participants who were in either the



listed legal charge or will discuss conditions were included in the analysis because the study was specifically focusing on determining differences between rural vs non-rural participants response to applicants with a criminal history. Inclusion of the “no legal charge” condition would add participants that had not viewed an application with an entry on the legal section of the application. There were 293 participants who were included in the analysis. However, the results from the analysis revealed the expected cell frequency was less than 5 for one of the cells (25%). Therefore, only results from the Fisher’s Exact test are reported. The Fisher’s Exact test revealed the association between decision to grant an interview by rural area was not statistically significant,  $p = .17$ .

### **Decision Predicted by Condition, Conservatism, Fundamentalism, and Stigma**

A binomial logistic regression was conducted to determine the extent to which the decision to grant an interview was predicted by the main effects of the condition of the independent variable, CASA score, RRF score, and PCS score (see Table 4). Interactions between variables were not assessed due to the small sample size which would have created insufficient power for the analysis. Because rurality was not determined to be a significant factor by the previous analysis, it was not included in the regression. The linearity of the continuous variables with respect to the logit of the dependent variable was assessed via the Box-Tidwell (1962) procedure. Applying a Bonferroni correction while using all nine terms in the model resulted in statistical significance being accepted when  $p < .005$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). With this assessment in mind, all continuous independent variables were found to be linearly related to the logit of the dependent variable. The logistic regression model was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(5) = 14.586$ ,  $p = .01$ . The model explained 8.7% (Nagelkerke  $R^2$ ) of the variance in the decision to grant an interview and correctly classified 94.1% of the cases. Of the six

predictor variables only the three conditions of independent variable were significant. The odds of a participant saying “no” to an interview were 5.36 times higher when they viewed the application with “possession of a controlled substance” as compared to the application with “no legal charge.” Participants in the “will discuss” condition had 8.35 times higher odds of saying “no” to an interview as compared to the application with “no legal charge” with 95% CIs [1.15, 24.94], and [1.87, 37.33] respectively.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

### Overview

There is a lack of research investigating methods to reduce experienced stigma due to substance use legal charges in employment settings. The presence of these charges serve as a barrier to employment and lead to psychological distress (Pager, 2003; Turney, et al., 2013). The presence of these legal charges prime unfavorably perceived personality traits of those who use substances within potential employers (Curran et al., 2014; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000; Tews et al., 2011). In addition, quantitative research on hiring decisions in rural vs. non-rural areas was lacking (Lewis, 2003; Travis, et al., 2001; Wodhal 2006). Finally, there was conflicting research making it difficult to determine if fundamentalism and conservatism influence willingness to grant an interview to someone with a substance use legal history (Arnold, et al., 2002; Humphreys & Rappaport, 1993; Koenig & Larson, 2001).

The current study investigated whether changing the language used in the criminal history section of an employment application would make it more or less likely for an individual with a criminal history of substance use to obtain an interview. Additionally, the study investigated the relationships between rurality, substance use stigma, fundamentalism, and conservatism on likeliness to grant an interview for an applicant with a criminal history related to substance use.

### Changing the Legal History Language

The results of the study showed non-significant results between the participants in the control condition (no legal charges) and the “possession of a controlled substance” condition. This finding was inconsistent with our hypothesis. We expected more participants would deny an interview to an applicant who listed “possession of a controlled substance” under legal history.

However, significantly more participants denied an interview when the applicant listed “will discuss” under legal history compared to the no charge condition. The difference between the “possession of a controlled substance” and the “will discuss” condition was non-significant.

Further examination using participant confidence in the decision to grant an interview and likelihood to grant an interview was consistent with the current hypothesis. Participants had significantly higher confidence in the decision to grant an interview for the participants in the control condition compared to the “possession of a controlled substance” and “will discuss” conditions. Furthermore, the likelihood to grant an interview demonstrated similar results. Participants had higher likelihood to grant an interview for participants in the control condition compared to the “possession of a controlled substance” and “will discuss” conditions.

Although not statistically significant, more participants denied an interview in the “will discuss” condition compared to the “possession of a controlled substance” condition. This was also consistent with the finding examining the confidence in the decision to grant an interview. While not statistically significant, the mean scores demonstrated participants had higher confidence for the ‘possession of a controlled substance’ condition compared to the “will discuss” condition.

While non-significant results on the initial investigation are not consistent with current literature, they do highlight some important findings. Compared to the control condition, significantly more participants denied an interview in the “will discuss” condition, but the difference with the “possession of a controlled substance” was not statistically significant. One explanation for this difference may be honesty. Kosterman et al. (2005) found a broad negative association when examining positive adult behaviors with substance use and honesty. It is possible participants viewing the application with the “possession of a controlled substance”

perceived the applicant as being honest, which made them less likely to say no to an interview. Conversely, participants who viewed “will discuss” may have perceived the participant as less honest, resulting in a significant result. A study by Johnson, Rowatt, and Petrini (2011) found that honesty and humility predicted better job performance and was highly valued in employers. It is possible that by being honest the applicant was rated more positively and considered a better applicant for employment. The finding suggests being honest about a past legal history of substance use may be sufficient to increase the chances of obtaining an employment interview. However, the results of the confidence in the decision and likelihood to grant an interview were consistent with the current hypothesis.

In addition the participants’ own personal experience with either their own substance use, or knowledge of someone close to them who has used substances may have influenced the result. SAMHSA (2013) identified the highest rates of individuals with substance use disorders to be between the ages of 18 to 25. This is the typical age range for traditional college students, and it is possible that the participants are personally familiar with an individual who has had a substance use disorder. Stevens, Jason, Ram, and Light (2015) discuss that the use of social resources results in a higher rate of abstinence for individual’s with substance use disorders. It is possible that individual’s within the participant’s social network have reached out for support at some point in time. It has been shown that direct interaction with a stigmatized population can reduce stigma (Heijnders & Van Der Meij, 2006). Therefore, it is possible that the participant’s own personal experience with an individual who has had a substance use disorder may have influenced the result.

### **Rural Differences**

There were no significant differences between rural and non-rural participants on

decision to grant an interview to applications with “possession of a controlled substance” or “will discuss” under legal history. The findings of the study are inconsistent with our hypotheses, and inconsistent with previous research (Lewis, 2003; Wodhal, 2006).

Although inconsistent with previous findings, the current study illustrates some important findings. Previous research indicates large differences in the number of people using substances in rural vs. non-rural communities have reduced over time (Cronk & Sarvela, 1997). In fact, research in rural communities in the southeast indicates proportionally higher numbers of those who use substances in these areas compared to their urban counterparts (Browne, Priester, Clone, Iachini, DeHart, & Hock, 2016). It is possible with the increased number of individuals using substances in rural areas, attitudes toward those who use substances have also changed. With a higher rate of acquaintance density, it may be likely individuals from rural communities have close relations with persons who have abused substances (Freudenburg, 1986; Wodhal, 2006). Furthermore, due to the higher rate of acquaintance density, individuals from rural areas will likely have greater knowledge of persons who have successfully recovered from the use of substances, which may further align their attitudes toward those who use substances with their urban counterparts. The results of this study make it apparent that further research is required.

### **Application Condition, Substance Use Stigma, Conservativism, and Fundamentalism**

The results of the analysis produced a significant result for the application condition, and a nonsignificant result for the levels of stigma, conservativism, and fundamentalism. The significant result of the treatment condition was consistent with the study’s hypothesis. The nonsignificant result from the levels of stigma, conservativism, and fundamentalism was not consistent with the study’s hypothesis. The results demonstrated participants who viewed the “possession of a controlled substance” condition had 5.36 times higher odds of saying no to an

interview compared to the control condition. The participants who viewed the “will discuss” application had 8.35 higher odds of saying no to an interview compared to the control condition. The results clearly show providing a vague response on the application will result in higher odds of not being selected for an interview. It is possible that although substance use stigma is present, as demonstrated by the difference between the treatment conditions, priming substance use stigma is preferable to leaving a response that may be perceived as dishonest.

While the levels of stigma, conservatism, and fundamentalism were nonsignificant, the results are important to consider. While the levels of these factors vary between participants, they were not a significant trait that factored into their decision to grant an interview. Regardless of their personal beliefs, the participants’ decisions appeared to be solely based upon the presence of a legal charge. The finding suggests interventions to reduce stigma related to employment for substance abuse populations are possible without needing to call into question an individual’s personal values.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations of the current study which should be considered when interpreting and generalizing the results. The participants are college students from a southeastern university which has several implications. These participants likely do not have any experience with hiring decisions, and it is possible differences would be found if this study was replicated with hiring managers. Additionally, based upon the definition of rurality, the majority of the participants identified as being from a rural area. This is not uncommon given the location of the university, but may influence results differentially compared to other samples.

Furthermore, given the location of the university, it is possible differences in the levels of stigma,

conservatism, and fundamentalism would be greater given a more geographically diverse sample size.

A further limitation of the current study was the criteria for inclusion to grant an interview. Participants were instructed to read a job description and then make a determination on whether they would grant an interview based upon the application. The current study examined whether a participant would generally grant an interview, which it demonstrated. However, in an actual employment interview selection, the stakes are higher. There are generally limited resources to conduct interviews and there are a limited number of interview options available for a large number of applicants. The majority of applicants made the decision to grant the interview, which may be due in part to a lack of the logistical considerations inherent in actual business decisions. Future research should include more real-world analogous parameters for decision to interview, such as including information about the number of applicants, number of available interview spots, and other constraints. No information from this study can be used to determine if a participant would be more willing to grant an interview to one applicant over another, as each participant was only provided with one application type to review. In comparison to an applicant with no legal history, a participant may decide differently regarding decision to interview an applicant with any legal history information on their application.

This study included a manipulation check with the intent to determine participants were paying attention to the application as they completed the study. The question asked what part of the application was considered when making their decision. It was assumed participants would respond indicating they considered the legal section if there was a legal charge present. However, after reviewing the results many participants indicated they considered other parts of the application. There were several participants who stated they considered the work history despite



having legal charges. This indicated the manipulation check was not robust enough to ensure participants had viewed the legal section, which calls into question their level of attention when completing the study. Furthermore, the ordering of the “yes” or “no” decision followed by the Likert scale questions measuring likelihood to grant an interview and confidence in the decision to grant an interview could have been re-ordered to provide a more realistic experience. As mentioned above, the study lacked any sense of priority for applicant to grant an interview. By re-ordering the Likert scale likelihood and confidence questions it may have resulted in the participant engaging in more consideration prior to making their final decision, in turn providing a more realistic experience.

In addition, the focus of this study was a specific substance use charge. There may be differences in the type of charge and the willingness to grant an interview. While this study has demonstrated listing “will discuss” on an application leads to lower odds of receiving an interview compared to a listed substance charge, there may be other charges where listing “will discuss” would be preferable. Future research would help to provide further clarity.

Finally, this study did not require the participants to disclose their own experience with individuals who have a history of substance use. Additionally, the participant was not required to disclose if they had a previous history of substance abuse. Past personal experience with this population may have had a mediating effect influencing the results.

### **Theoretical Implications and Future Directions**

The current study highlighted important findings which demonstrate a need for future research. The non-significant difference found between the “no legal history” condition and “possession of a controlled substance” condition highlights the need for further examination into factors that may have influenced this result. Identification of factors that will increase the chance

for an individual with a legal history of a substance use disorder to obtain an employment interview could have far reaching implications for this population. It could result in a better quality of life for these individuals, which in turn could have a greater impact on their ability to prevent a return to substance use. Future research should focus on several factors to achieve this goal. Creating a more robust scenario where the application process is more realistic would help to determine if this finding has more sound external validity. Incorporation of more specific manipulation checks and potentially adding “catch questions” would help to determine the participants’ level of attention when reading the application, demonstrating that they are in fact taking into consideration the applicant’s prior legal history. In addition, it may be beneficial to determine the perceived personality traits the potential employer has for an applicant who lists a specific legal charge instead of a vague response such as “will discuss” to determine specifically the differences that are being perceived by the employer that are creating the desired result. Furthermore, more inquiry into the participant’s own personal exposure to individuals with substance use history should be explored. Upon identification of participant’s exposure to the population, the relationship can be controlled for in future analyses.

Regarding the rural findings, it will be important to focus efforts to determine what difference continue to exist with regards to substance use and employment research in rural areas. It will be important to determine what factors are influencing these results. If these factors are identified, more resources can be focused on specific areas to decrease stigma and provide an environment that can be more conducive to enabling individuals with a previous legal history of substance use disorders to obtain employment.

There is a lack of research regarding individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. While there are numerous studies on individuals with active substance use disorders,

there are very few studies including individuals who have a previous history of substance use disorder. This may be due to greater accessibility to individuals with active substance use disorders located in treatment centers, but greater efforts should be made to work with individuals who have successfully recovered from substance use. It is possible that many of the traits that have been found with individuals with active substance use disorders do not apply to individuals who do not actively have a substance use disorder. If differences are found, it may help to reduce stigma that is currently held towards individuals with a history of substance use disorders.

### **Conclusion**

The current study sought to determine methods of reducing substance use stigma for the purpose of employment applications. Previous research shows substance use stigma is reduced through personal contact with the stigmatized individual. The current study examined methods in which it may be more likely for an individual with a substance use history to reach the point of personal contact in the application process. The study demonstrated an applicant with a possession of a controlled substance charge would be more likely to obtain an employment interview if they listed “possession of a controlled substance” instead of writing “will discuss” in the legal history section of their employment application.

While there were not significant differences between rurality, stigma, conservatism, and fundamentalism, this may be a sign of a positive direction. Previous studies demonstrating significant differences in attitudes toward substance use populations based on geographic region may need to be re-evaluated. There have been significant strides in education regarding substance use and stigma reduction. The current findings may indicate these efforts are having an effect on the overall community. Future research would benefit from continued research in this

field in order to provide the best assistance for individuals in recovery from substance use disorders. By working toward solutions for reintegrating these individuals into the workforce, we can provide a better chance of sustained recovery.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Sample Job Description**

#### **Manager Job Responsibilities:**

Accomplishes department objectives by managing staff; planning and evaluating department activities.

#### **Manager Job Duties:**

- Maintains staff by recruiting, selecting, orienting, and training employees; maintaining a safe, secure, and legal work environment; developing personal growth opportunities.
- Accomplishes staff results by communicating job expectations; planning, monitoring, and appraising job results; coaching, counseling, and disciplining employees; developing, coordinating, and enforcing systems, policies, procedures, and productivity standards.
- Establishes strategic goals by gathering pertinent business, financial, service, and operations information; identifying and evaluating trends and options; choosing a course of action; defining objectives; evaluating outcomes.
- Accomplishes financial objectives by forecasting requirements; preparing an annual budget; scheduling expenditures; analyzing variances; initiating corrective actions.
- Maintains quality service by enforcing quality and customer service standards; analyzing and resolving quality and customer service problems; identifying trends; recommending system improvements.
- Maintains professional and technical knowledge by attending educational workshops; reviewing professional publications; establishing personal networks; benchmarking state-of-the-art practices; participating in professional societies.
- Contributes to team effort by accomplishing related results as needed.

#### **Manager Skills and Qualifications:**

Performance Management, Project Management, Coaching, Supervision, Quality Management, Results Driven, Developing Budgets, Developing Standards, Foster Teamwork, Handles Pressure, Giving Feedback

**APPENDIX B**

**PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 1. Based upon the information in the application, would you be willing to grant this applicant an interview for employment? Yes / No
- 2. Upon which section of the application was your decision primarily based? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Please rate your confidence in your decision

I-----I-----I-----I-----I-----I-----I

Not at all confident/Not confident /Less confident /Neutral/ More confident /Very confident /Completely Confident

- 4. Please rate your likelihood of granting an interview based upon the application

I-----I-----I-----I-----I-----I-----I

Not at all likely      Not likely      Less likely      Neutral      More likely      Very likely      Extremely likely

## Appendix C

### Job Application (No Legal Charge)

#### An Equal Opportunity Employer

Company is an equal opportunity employer. This application will not be used for limiting or excluding any applicant from consideration for employment on a basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation in the application and/or interview process should notify a representative of the organization.

*Please print and fill out all sections*

#### Applicant Information

Applicant Name John Smith

How were you referred to Company? Job Posting

#### Employment Positions

Position(s) applying for: Manager

What days and hours are you available for work? Any time, 40+ hr. weekly

Can you work on the weekends? [] Y or [] N

Can you work evenings? [] Y or [] N

Are you available to work overtime? [] Y or [] N



**Personal Information:**

If hired, would you have transportation to/from work?  Y or  N

If hired, are you willing to submit to and pass a controlled substance test?  Y or  N

Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, either with / without reasonable accommodation?  Y or  N

If no, describe the functions that cannot be performed

---

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor)?  Y or  N

If yes, please describe the crime - state nature of the crime(s). \_\_\_\_\_

*(Note: No applicant will be denied employment solely on the grounds of conviction of a criminal offense. The date of the offense, the nature of the offense, including any significant details that affect the description of the event, and the surrounding circumstances and the relevance of the offense to the position(s) applied for may, however, be considered.)*

**Education, Training and Experience****High School:**

School name: Monroe High School

Number of years completed: 4

Did you graduate?  Y or  N

Degree / diploma earned: College Prep

**College / University:**School name: Delvin State UniversityNumber of years completed: 4Did you graduate?  Y or  NDegree / diploma earned: Business**Employment History**Are you currently employed?  Y or  NIf you are currently employed, may we contact your current employer?  Y or  N**Below, please describe past and present employment positions.**Name of Employer: TargetBusiness Type: RetailLength of Employment (Include Dates): 1/2011-PresentPosition: Assistant ManagerMay we contact this employer for references?  Y or  NName of Employer: Applebee'sBusiness Type: RestaurantLength of Employment (Include Dates): 8/2009 – 1/2011Position: Server/Assistant ManagerMay we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

Name of Employer: Publix

Business Type: Supermarket

Length of Employment (Include Dates): 11/2006 – 8/2009

Position: Cashier

May we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

**Please Read and Initial Each Paragraph, then Sign Below**

I certify that I have not purposely withheld any information that might adversely affect my chances for hiring. I attest to the fact that the answers given by me are true & correct to the best of my knowledge and ability. I understand that any omission (including any misstatement) of material fact on this application or on any document used to secure can be grounds for rejection of application or, if I am employed by this company, terms for my immediate expulsion from the company.

\_\_\_\_\_

I permit the company to examine my references, record of employment, education record, and any other information I have provided. I authorize the references I have listed to disclose any information related to my work record and my professional experiences with them, without giving me prior notice of such disclosure. In addition, I release the company, my former employers & all other persons, corporations, partnerships & associations from any & all claims, demands or liabilities arising out of or in any way related to such examination or revelation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Signature:** John Smith

## Appendix D

### Job Application (Legal Charge)

#### An Equal Opportunity Employer

Company is an equal opportunity employer. This application will not be used for limiting or excluding any applicant from consideration for employment on a basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation in the application and/or interview process should notify a representative of the organization.

*Please print and fill out all sections*

#### Applicant Information

Applicant Name John Smith

How were you referred to Company? Job Posting

#### Employment Positions

Position(s) applying for: Manager

What days and hours are you available for work? Any time, 40+ hr. weekly

Can you work on the weekends?  Y or  N

Can you work evenings?  Y or  N

Are you available to work overtime?  Y or  N

**Personal Information:**

If hired, would you have transportation to/from work?  Y or  N

If hired, are you willing to submit to and pass a controlled substance test?  Y or  N

Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, either with / without reasonable accommodation?  Y or  N

If no, describe the functions that cannot be performed

---

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor)?  Y or  N

If yes, please describe the crime - state nature of the crime(s). Possession of a controlled substance

*(Note: No applicant will be denied employment solely on the grounds of conviction of a criminal offense. The date of the offense, the nature of the offense, including any significant details that affect the description of the event, and the surrounding circumstances and the relevance of the offense to the position(s) applied for may, however, be considered.)*

**Education, Training and Experience****High School:**

School name: Monroe High School

Number of years completed: 4

Did you graduate?  Y or  N

Degree / diploma earned: College Prep

**College / University:**

School name: Delvin State University

Number of years completed: 4

Did you graduate?  Y or  N

Degree / diploma earned: Business

**Employment History**

Are you currently employed?  Y or  N

If you are currently employed, may we contact your current employer?  Y or  N

**Below, please describe past and present employment positions.**

Name of Employer: Target

Business Type: Retail

Length of Employment (Include Dates): 1/2011-Present

Position: Assistant Manager

May we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

Name of Employer: Applebee's

Business Type: Restaurant

Length of Employment (Include Dates): 8/2009 – 1/2011

Position: Server/Assistant Manager

May we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

Name of Employer: Publix

Business Type: Supermarket

Length of Employment (Include Dates): 11/2006 – 8/2009

Position: Cashier

May we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

**Please Read and Initial Each Paragraph, then Sign Below**

I certify that I have not purposely withheld any information that might adversely affect my chances for hiring. I attest to the fact that the answers given by me are true & correct to the best of my knowledge and ability. I understand that any omission (including any misstatement) of material fact on this application or on any document used to secure can be grounds for rejection of application or, if I am employed by this company, terms for my immediate expulsion from the company.

\_\_\_\_\_

I permit the company to examine my references, record of employment, education record, and any other information I have provided. I authorize the references I have listed to disclose any information related to my work record and my professional experiences with them, without giving me prior notice of such disclosure. In addition, I release the company, my former employers & all other persons, corporations, partnerships & associations from any & all claims, demands or liabilities arising out of or in any way related to such examination or revelation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Signature:** John Smith



## Appendix E

### Job Application (Will Discuss)

#### An Equal Opportunity Employer

Company is an equal opportunity employer. This application will not be used for limiting or excluding any applicant from consideration for employment on a basis prohibited by local, state, or federal law. Applicants requiring reasonable accommodation in the application and/or interview process should notify a representative of the organization.

*Please print and fill out all sections*

#### Applicant Information

Applicant Name John Smith

How were you referred to Company? Job Posting

#### Employment Positions

Position(s) applying for: Manager

What days and hours are you available for work? Any time, 40+ hr. weekly

Can you work on the weekends?  Y or  N

Can you work evenings?  Y or  N

Are you available to work overtime?  Y or  N

**Personal Information:**

If hired, would you have transportation to/from work?  Y or  N

If hired, are you willing to submit to and pass a controlled substance test?  Y or  N

Are you able to perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, either with / without reasonable accommodation?  Y or  N

If no, describe the functions that cannot be performed

---

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense (felony or misdemeanor)?  Y or  N

If yes, please describe the crime - state nature of the crime(s). Will discuss

*(Note: No applicant will be denied employment solely on the grounds of conviction of a criminal offense. The date of the offense, the nature of the offense, including any significant details that affect the description of the event, and the surrounding circumstances and the relevance of the offense to the position(s) applied for may, however, be considered.)*

**Education, Training and Experience****High School:**

School name: Monroe High School

Number of years completed: 4

Did you graduate?  Y or  N

Degree / diploma earned: College Prep

**College / University:**School name: Delvin State UniversityNumber of years completed: 4Did you graduate?  Y or  NDegree / diploma earned: Business**Employment History**Are you currently employed?  Y or  NIf you are currently employed, may we contact your current employer?  Y or  N**Below, please describe past and present employment positions.**Name of Employer: TargetBusiness Type: RetailLength of Employment (Include Dates): 1/2011-PresentPosition: Assistant ManagerMay we contact this employer for references?  Y or  NName of Employer: Applebee'sBusiness Type: RestaurantLength of Employment (Include Dates): 8/2009 – 1/2011Position: Server/Assistant ManagerMay we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

Name of Employer: Publix

Business Type: Supermarket

Length of Employment (Include Dates): 11/2006 – 8/2009

Position: Cashier

May we contact this employer for references?  Y or  N

**Please Read and Initial Each Paragraph, then Sign Below**

I certify that I have not purposely withheld any information that might adversely affect my chances for hiring. I attest to the fact that the answers given by me are true & correct to the best of my knowledge and ability. I understand that any omission (including any misstatement) of material fact on this application or on any document used to secure can be grounds for rejection of application or, if I am employed by this company, terms for my immediate expulsion from the company.

\_\_\_\_\_

I permit the company to examine my references, record of employment, education record, and any other information I have provided. I authorize the references I have listed to disclose any information related to my work record and my professional experiences with them, without giving me prior notice of such disclosure. In addition, I release the company, my former employers & all other persons, corporations, partnerships & associations from any & all claims, demands or liabilities arising out of or in any way related to such examination or revelation.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Applicant's Signature:** John Smith

**Appendix F**  
**Demographic Questionnaire**

1. What is your age?
2. What is your nation of origin?
3. What is your ethnicity, or ethnicities (i.e., African American, Asian, Hispanic, Caucasian, etc.)?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your current year in school?
6. What is your current major?
7. What is the zip code of your home town (i.e., where you went to high school)?

Table 1

*Summary of Intercorrelations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Standard Error for the Scores on the CASA, RRF, PCS, and Rural Area*

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. CASA	–			
2. RRF	.17*	–		
3. PCS	.20*	.34*	–	
4. Rural	.03	-.05	.05	–
M	132.61	61.40	4.30	.02
SD	16.72	23.11	1.62	.41
SE	.78	1.08	.08	.02

Note. Intercorrelations for study participants (n = 458). For scales 1-3 higher scores indicate higher levels of substance use stigma, religious fundamentalism, and political conservatism respectively. Scale 4 is measured as 1 = Rural, 2 = Non-Rural. CASA = Community Attitudes towards Substance Abusers scale; RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale; PCS = Political Conservatism Scale; Rural = Rural or Urban area; M = Mean; SD = standard deviation; SE = standard error.

\*  $p < .01$  (two-tailed)

Table 2

*Results of Chi-square Test of Homogeneity for Decision to Grant Interview by Application Condition*

Decision to Grant Interview	Application Condition		
	No Legal History	Listed Legal Charge	Will Discuss
Yes	152 (98.7%) <sup>a</sup>	141 (93.4%) <sup>a,b</sup>	138 (90.2%) <sup>b</sup>
No	2 (1.3%) <sup>a</sup>	10 (6.6%) <sup>a,b</sup>	15 (9.8%) <sup>b</sup>

*Note.*  $\chi^2 = 10.22$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .01$  (two-tailed). Scores with different superscripts significantly differ at the .05 level

Table 3

*Chi-square Test of Association for Decision to Grant Interview by Rural Status*

Rural Area	Decision to Grant Interview	
	Yes	No
Rural	220 (93.2%)	16 (6.8%)
Urban	50 (87.7%)	7 (12.3%)*

*Note.* \* Expected cell count was less than 5. Fishers Exact Test was not significant,  $p = .17$  (two-tailed)



Table 4

*Binomial Logistic Regression with Application Conditions, CASA, RRF, and PCS predicting the Decision to Say No to an Interview*

Predictor	B	SE	Wald	Odds Ratio
Application Condition – No Charge	- *	-	7.88	-
Application Condition – Listed Charge	1.68*	.79	4.57	5.36
Application Condition – Will Discuss	2.12*	.76	7.71	8.35
CASA	.01	.01	.40	1.01
RRF	-.004	.01	.15	1.00
PCS	.18	.15	1.47	1.19

*Note.* CASA = Community Attitudes towards Substance Abusers scale; RRF = Revised Religious Fundamentalism Scale; PCS = Political Conservatism Scale

\*p < .05