



Programs that Help Offenders Stay Out of Prison

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INTRODUCTION

The American public is growing increasingly impatient with the failure of correctional systems to significantly reduce the alarming rate at which ex-offenders are released into their communities ill-prepared to constructively engage in employment and socially positive behavior. The dilemma is that, while crime rates are down, incarceration rates continue to rise at a dramatic rate. In 2007, there were over 725,000 inmates released from state or federal jurisdiction.¹ Of those released, nearly two-thirds will be rearrested within three years; the largest increase in the nation's prisons is recycled offenders.²

Sound correctional practice demands the inclusion of a variety of programs to address the many needs of the inmate population (e.g. the MTC Success for Life® philosophy). Such an approach includes programs provided during the daily structured routine, that is, education, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, mental health and trauma treatment, and work. After the structured day, other programs (e.g. spiritual development, recreation, hobby crafts, library access, and personal wellness) are provided to help meet the full extent of what is needed to deter further criminal involvement.

The most meaningful, long-range measure of any prison's real effectiveness is—and ought to be—success in reducing the number of offenders who wind up back in prison once they are released.

Many legislators are becoming more aware that modest targeted investments in firmly structured educational and drug treatment programs in prisons will have a positive personal impact on the offender, significantly reduce crime and victimization in our communities, and save millions of dollars in taxes, policing, and re-incarceration. Trauma and mental health treatment are critical components of this process.

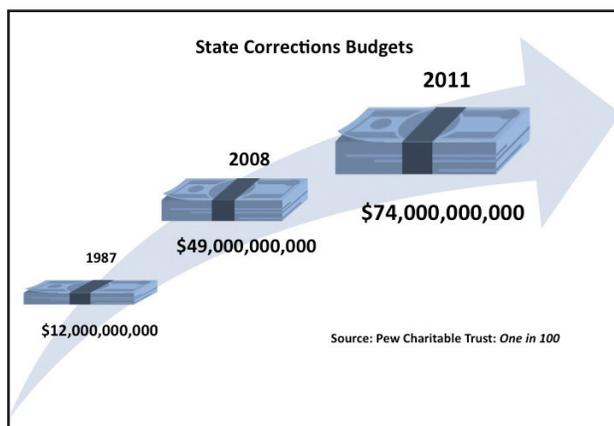
It is also vital that correctional programs provide a reentry or other transitional component, especially for high-risk or high-need inmates, to enhance family bonds; support substance abuse treatment aftercare; continue or develop linkages with employers, mentors, and the faith-based community; and support the search for appropriate housing and pro-social relationships and activities as well.

This publication will focus on education and substance abuse treatment, areas that have been extensively researched and provide evidence of effectiveness.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

More offenders are returning to crime and prison despite growing expenditures for corrections. Over the next three years, the projection is for an increase in corrections-related spending of \$25 billion.⁴ Research on correctional programming is growing and there is clear evidence to support correctional programs that work toward achieving meaningful reductions in recidivism.

With effective correctional programs in place, recidivism can be reduced by 26%-40%.⁵ This results in a tremendous cost saving to taxpayers and harm reduction to potential victims by avoiding those costs and trouble associated with re-offending. New crime and victim costs are estimated in the billions and include expenses associated with police, courts, prosecution, and re-incarceration.⁶



The most meaningful, long-range measure of any prison's real effectiveness is, and ought to be, success in reducing the number of offenders who are re-incarcerated after they are released. As it is, the US corrections system has basically become a revolving door for recycling criminal behavior, and these recycled offenders now account for 52% of the prison population.³

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With offenders staying only an average of 28.9 months in a correctional facility,⁷ the likelihood they will re-offend if not provided programming will increase; the prison population will continue to rise and costs will soar as a result. Clearly, it is not a decision about whether to fund correctional programming, but rather a decision about which programs are most effective in achieving their desired outcomes.⁸

Education in prisons is one of the most effective forms of future crime prevention.⁸ More than half of the adults incarcerated in American federal and state prisons can neither read nor write, and they have less than an eighth-grade education.⁹ “Incarcerated adults have among the lowest academic attainment and

substance dependent.¹³ This information is consistent with previous research which found that only about one-third of inmates have substance abuse addictions serious enough to require residential treatment.¹⁴ However, there continues to be inadequate capacity in prisons for substance abuse treatment programs relative to the need resulting in shortened treatment and in few inmates receiving treatment at all. Currently, the most prevalent form of service in prisons and jails is substance abuse education.¹⁵

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) conducted a systematic review of 571 rigorous comparison group evaluations of adult corrections, juvenile corrections, and prevention programs.

These reviews led to a number of conclusions regarding program effectiveness (average recidivism reduction rates) and the number of studies in the specific program area:

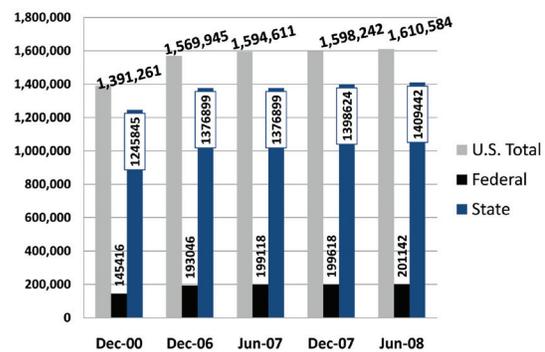
- **In-prison drug treatment (Therapeutic Communities) – 6.9% (6 studies)**
- **In-jail drug treatment – 6% (9 studies)**
- **Cognitive behavioral programs – 8.2% (25 studies)**
- **Correctional industry programs – 7.8% (4 studies)**
- **Vocational education/training programs – 12.6% (3 studies)**
- **Adult basic education – 5.1% (7 studies)**

Public policies incorporating these options can yield positive outcomes.⁸

literacy rates and the highest disability rates in U.S. society.”¹⁰ Studies have indicated that prison education programs are “more effective in reducing recidivism than correctional work” which offenders may be assigned during their incarceration.¹¹ Moreover, the cost of providing postsecondary education opportunities for incarcerated adults is less than the cost to imprison them, which provides a long-term savings to taxpayers.¹²

Research indicates the estimate that nearly three-quarters of newly incarcerated inmates can be considered

US Inmate Population Growth



Only 41% of all state and federal inmates have a high school diploma or GED¹⁶ and 31% of probationers have not completed high school or its equivalent. Further, only 89% of prisoners who need remedial education are receiving it.¹⁷ And even though more than 250,000 inmates are serving time on a felony drug conviction, only 74% of America’s prisons offer substance abuse treatment to their inmates. While many correctional programs are important, the research is unequivocal that both hard-core drug treatment programs and credential-based education and training programs dramatically reduce the rate of recidivism.¹⁸

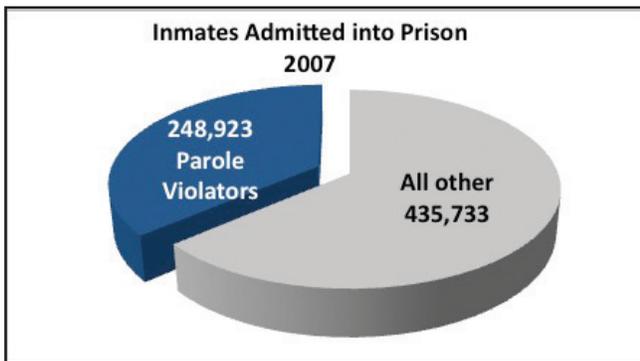
THE PRISON POPULATION IS GROWING DESPITE DECREASE IN CRIME

The US Bureau of Justice Statistics found that while violent crime rates were not statistically different from rates found in 2005, the rates had fallen by 43.4 percent from 1998 to 2007; similarly, property crime rates had fallen for the same time period by 32.6 percent.¹⁹ Despite these falling crime rates, the U.S. prison population is actually growing at an alarming rate, from 744,000 inmates in 1985²⁰ to more than 2.3 million in 2007.²¹

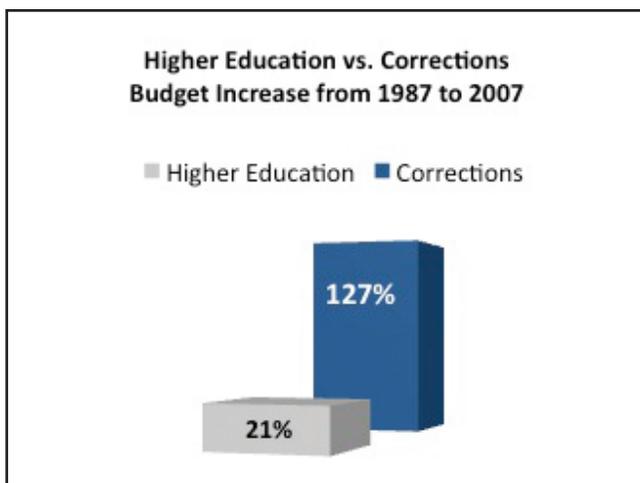
Increased recidivism rates are costing American taxpayers more money and adversely impacting state

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budgets. In 1997, 67.5% prisoners were re-arrested within three years for a felony or serious misdemeanor, up from 62.5% in 1983.²² In 1983, 41.4% of those re-arrested went back to prison; in 1994, it was 51.8%. In addition, the number of parole violators has jumped 65.2% since the 1980s. Of nearly 697,000 inmates admitted into state prisons in 2007, 35.7% (248,923) of them were parole violators.²³ Clearly, the rate of growth for returned offenders far outpaces the rate of new perpetrators.



Furthermore, a study of 272,111 state prisoners released in 1994 and followed for three years found that 183,675 ex-offenders were charged with an average of four new crimes each.²⁴ The Federal Bureau of Prison study also pointed out that program graduates are 74% less likely to engage in prison misconduct over a 14 month period as well as a finding that two-thirds of released drug offenders were re-arrested for a new offense within three years, and 41.2% of them were re-arrested for the same offense that had put them in prison in the first place.



Because recidivism continues to be high, both the human and financial costs also continue to rise. From

1987 to 2007 states have increased spending on higher education by 21% but have increased spending on corrections by 127%.²⁵ State correctional system wide expenditures increased, in the last twenty years states have seen corrections budgets increase by 315% from \$10.6 billion to \$44.06 billion in 2007.²⁶

EFFECTIVE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMMING

Programs should provide the impetus for change within the offender. Correctional institutions looking to establish programs that will result in recidivism reductions by at least 26%-40% should focus on the principles of education and substance abuse treatment, described in this section, that have been shown to lead to optimal results.²⁷

The Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) identified “principles of effective correctional programming” that apply to both education and drug treatment programs. CSC concluded that “effective (appropriate) programs are behavioral/highly structured in nature and target the criminogenic attitudes, values, and behaviors of higher-risk offenders.”²⁸ The University of Cincinnati’s Criminal Justice Institute has developed a well-known Correctional Program Checklist; this adaptation of the Correctional Program Assessment Inventory provides a guide that is useful in reviewing the dimensions of effective correctional programs (see Appendix A.).

Education Provides Opportunities

Higher education and skill attainment translate to better wages and better jobs for ex-prisoners and better workers for employers. As of 2014, it is expected that 78% of all jobs will require some form of postsecondary education.²⁹ State policies and highly focused educational efforts are needed to ensure that no prisoner leaves prison without at least a high school diploma, GED, or some form of technical or vocational certification.

When the economy eventually recovers, every individual will be needed for the workplace, ex-prisoners included. In the end, it is not so much that the US cannot afford the growing cost of recidivism to the correctional system; it is that the economy will not be able to sustain the future cost of a shortage of skilled workers.

Even though the future need for workers will be great, many adult prisoners are high school dropouts. Further, more than half of the adults incarcerated in

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American federal and state prisons can neither read nor write, and many have less than an eighth-grade education.³⁰ Disparities in minority education opportunities is evident in prison settings, where only 47% of blacks and 39.6% of Hispanics had achieved at that level, compared to 68% of whites.³¹ In prisons, white, black and Hispanic male inmates aged 20 through 39 are markedly less educated than their counterparts in the general population.³² (For more on education see Appendix B)

It is not sufficient for corrections to simply offer education programs. The programs must meet the needs of the offenders and must be designed to match the “different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and multiple literacies” of offenders.³³ Other variables that contribute to the success of educational programs are the quality of the teaching staff, adequate resources and supplies for staff, and the overall correctional facility environment.³⁴

Studies of offender perceptions of their correctional education report that they understand the connection between education and success after release. Furthermore, offenders are generally pleased with their education programs.³⁵ In a study comparing perceptions of participants in vocational programs and academic programs, academic students reported an increase in self-esteem as the primary motivation for their program participation.³⁶

There is evidence that post-secondary education has “a substantially stronger negative impact on recidivism hazard rates than do other forms of correctional education (e.g., high school, GED, vocation).”³⁷ A meta-analysis of studies published or reported between 1990 and 1999 on Post-Secondary Correctional Education (PSCE) with recidivism as the criterion found that offenders who participated in PSCE courses had a recidivism rate of 22% compared to that of 41% for offenders who did not participate in PSCE courses.³⁸

Education Impacts Recidivism

Studies in several states have indicated that recidivism rates have declined where offenders have received proper education.³⁹ Furthermore, the literature has shown that educated prisoners are less likely to find themselves back in prison a second time if they complete an education program and are taught skills to successfully read and write.⁴⁰ The literature also shows that in Ohio, while the overall recidivism rate was 40%, the recidivism rate for inmates enrolled in college was 18%. In addition, Ohio statistics show

that inmates graduating from college had recidivism rates reduced by 72% when compared to offenders not participating in any education program. Canadian statistics also demonstrated that offenders who completed at least two college courses had 50% lower recidivism rates.⁴¹ There is no doubt that correctional education programs produce millions of dollars per year in savings.⁴²

Effective Educational Program Principles

Educational programming typically encompasses Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), vocational education/training, and life skills. The impact of the educational program for a particular offender is influenced by the offender’s educational level when beginning the program along with the duration of participation. Exposure to educational programs must be extensive enough for individuals to earn diplomas and certificates; the higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the degree of success and the lower the rate of recidivism.⁴³

In order for credential-based education and training programs to reach their potential, the culture of the institution needs to be highly supportive of the programs and becoming outcome focused. Administrators and institutional staff must embrace a result-focused environment and commit to a formal time schedule and structured procedures. This means that offenders should remain in programs to their conclusion (except for health or security reasons). Meetings with staff and other administrative processes should be scheduled during non-program periods.

Research identifies the most important principles of effective intervention through correctional educational programs. These include an assessment, a focus on outcomes, sufficient duration and intensity, and high quality instructors and curricula.

Assessment

A formal assessment upon arrival of an offender to a correctional facility is essential. An assessment is a management tool used to determine remediation needs and guide offenders into appropriate programs so that resources are not wasted.

- Educational administrators should use a valid and reliable assessment instrument upon admission, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), to determine an offender’s academic level.

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- Following the initial assessment, educational objectives should be determined, and then ongoing progress assessments should be maintained to track program involvement and success.
- These standardized assessments promote uniform documentation for individual offender progress reports in meeting the individual's goals and objectives.

Outcome Focused

Formal education should be focused on specific outcomes, including GEDs and vocational certificates. A program's philosophy, direction, and expectations should be established and articulated through policy and procedure.

- An appropriate curriculum should be developed that directly supports offender student growth.
- Data should be collected to track program outcomes (e.g. GED attainment, vocational training credentials, college enrollment).

Instructors and Curricula

Educators should be certified and use skilled application of research-based curricula. Teaching is not just about knowing subjects, it is about the communication of those subjects to students. Certified correctional educators using appropriate curricula help offenders grow and develop.

- A timeline should be established to improve the knowledge and skill level of offenders.
- The educational program should be consistent with offenders' Individual Treatment Plans (ITP).
- The correctional educator must possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired through professional education and certification.
- Sound practice demands that certified teachers know their content, be aware of various methodologies, pedagogy, and provide appropriate context for the knowledge and skill set being taught.

Education pays off, but only if it is highly outcome focused, for a specific duration of time, with sufficient continuity, and has certain qualitative standards.

- Agency heads should hold wardens and administrators accountable for established outcomes.

Duration and Intensity

Formal education programs should be of appropriate duration, intensity, and continuity. Because many offenders are released within a relatively short period of time, it is critical to engage these individuals early and continuously during that period and then link them to community resources. For maximum effectiveness:

- Offenders must be engaged in an educational program for at least six months or longer to meet learning objectives.
- Programs need to have mandatory daily class attendance with minimal interruption.⁴⁴
- Programs must consider individual offenders' academic level, skill needs, and time projected to complete the program in relation to time left to serve.⁴⁵
- The program delivery system needs to allow for the continual entry and release of offenders from a facility, commonly known as open entry / open exit.

- Educators in a correctional classroom have to demonstrate principled, professional judgments in a variety of situations.

- Educators should apply performance-based assessment methods that are fair and valid.
- The educational program should be supported by trained peer and/or volunteer tutors.⁴⁶

SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAMS SAVE TAX DOLLARS

Reports on substance abuse treatment and prevention programs convincingly demonstrate that it is possible to break the cycle of substance abuse-related criminal behavior, reduce recidivism, and save tax dollars. This is easy to understand considering that an estimated 80% of the men and women in prison have been involved with drugs, and more than 250,000 inmates are serving time on a felony drug conviction.⁴⁹ Further, "fifty-three percent of State and 45% of Federal prisoners met DSM-IV criteria for drug dependence or abuse. "Among drug dependent prisoners, 40% of State and 49% of Federal inmates took part in some type of drug abuse program including

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Of all the adults incarcerated for felonies 80% had either regularly used illegal drugs or abused alcohol, been convicted of a drug or alcohol violation, were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of their crime, committed a crime to support their habit, or exhibited some combination of these characteristics. The key to reducing crime, the prison population and the enormous associated costs is to reduce the substance abuse among offenders.⁴⁹

self-help groups, peer counseling, and drug education. “However, the percentage who took part in treatment programs with a trained professional (15%) remained unchanged from 1997.”⁴⁷

Prisoners who successfully completed a generalized drug treatment and testing program were less likely to be re-incarcerated for technical violations compared to those who left the program prematurely or did not participate in the program at all.⁴⁸ After extensive research into programs that work, the Washington State Institute of Public Policy found that in-jail drug treatment reduced recidivism by 6% and in-prison drug treatment (therapeutic communities) reduced recidivism by 6.9%.⁴⁹ Further, according to a 2003 report from the Little Hoover Commission, alcohol and drug treatment can save \$7 in incarceration costs for every \$1 spent,⁵⁰ Based on an average treatment cost of \$6,500 per inmate and assuming training for only 10% (128,000) of inmates who are drug and alcohol abusers, the first-year savings would be in excess of \$5.82 billion.

Correctional Program Checklist that provides some parameters and dimensions of effective programs (see Appendix A.). The most important principles of effective intervention through substance abuse treatment programs include an assessment, sufficient structure and intensity, a cognitive focus, duration and continuity, and a comprehensive aftercare component that integrates community stakeholders.

Assessment

An offender assessment guides the development of an Individual Treatment Plan (ITP). Also, an assessment may identify special needs and/or personal issues so that support can be provided as needed. It is important to initiate the assessment process early in an offender’s incarceration so that limited time for appropriate programming is not wasted.

Results from assessments provide information to match offender needs with levels of programming, as well as allow offenders and staff to make better decisions concerning treatment provider matching, programming type, and intensity. Offenders are directed to one or more treatment programs based on areas of assessed need to eliminate substance abuse and reduce criminogenic factors.

Guidance services should also be provided to assist offenders in making positive and informed decisions. Guidance provided can help an offender analyze his/her situation and environment, select appropriate solutions to problems, and make realistic life plans. To derive the maximum benefit, institutions should strive:

When managed well, alcohol and drug treatment can save \$7 in incarceration costs for every \$1 spent, with gains attributable to reduced crime, enhanced workplace productivity, and lower health care costs.⁵⁰

Effective Substance Abuse Treatment Program Principles

Correlation studies show that participation in continuing care is associated with better drug and alcohol rehabilitation outcomes. As with educational programs, the success of a substance abuse treatment program is also dependent upon appropriate offender assessment; the structure, intensity, treatment focus, and continuity of the program; and the length of time offenders spend in the program.⁵² As mentioned earlier, the University of Cincinnati has developed a

- “To assess offender risk factors, utilization of an actuarial method (such as the LSI-R) with proven predictive validity for recidivism” ensures reliability.⁵³
- To select additional assessment tools to target treatment services to meet offender needs.⁵⁴
- To consider local norms to calibrate risk measures which should assess a variety of static (such as age) and dynamic (such as criminogenic) risk factors.⁵⁵

- To involve offenders in the decision process and encourage them to assume responsibility for their actions and choices.

Structure and Intensity

Treatment programming must be both highly structured and intensive. Programs using a highly structured, cognitive-behavioral curriculum with group settings in a therapeutic community are showing great success “in breaking the cycle of relapse and recidivism among seriously drug-involved offenders.”⁵⁶ Besides offender motivation levels, which can be an obstacle to success, other factors should be considered, such as:

- Successful programs within correctional institutions are structured and include compulsory treatment for most of the day in a group setting, integrating work and homework assignments into the daily routine. The balance of the day includes individual counseling and other pro-social activities.
- Explicit topics considered essential for drug treatment are:
 - o Drug education
 - o Cognitive and behavioral restructuring
 - o Recovery education
 - o Behavioral contracts and counseling
 - o Role-playing and modeling
 - o Aggression replacement training
 - o Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT)
 - o Relapse prevention
- Intense encounter groups provide the opportunity for peer group members, supported by staff counselors, to use positive persuasion to change attitudes and behavior.
- Offender group members should be subjected to frequent urinalysis testing.
- Treatment should be comprehensive, treating all the needs of the individual and not just their substance use.⁵⁷

Cognitive Focus

Treatment programs should be based on a cognitive-behavioral approach, focused on altering thoughts,

emotions, and behaviors associated with drug use and criminal acts.

- The program emphasis should be on changing anti-social thoughts and feelings with a strong group orientation.
- The program must enhance the offender’s ability to solve problems and manage self.
- The program must target criminogenic factors and should be designed to match the characteristics of the offender as well as to motivate the offender to participate.
- Multiple treatment components targeting addiction and criminality can teach behavioral strategies and skill building.
- Offenders must be involved in developing their treatment plans

Duration and Continuity

Structured substance abuse treatment programs must be of appropriate duration and continuity. The timing of program activation and the amount of daily programming are key components to achieving recidivism reductions and decreased substance abuse. Offenders being assessed as needing treatment should receive the following:

- Treatment dosage needs to be substantial. The treatment program should last six to twelve months or 200 hours to have the optimal “dose effect.”⁵⁸
- Daily program attendance must be mandatory.
- In all cases, prison program delivery should be coordinated with the offender’s need for academic, vocational, social, and cognitive-behavioral programs and scheduled to match the time remaining on the sentence.⁵⁹

Aftercare

The development of a “linked” aftercare program for prison offenders completing substance abuse treatment provides for treatment continuity. A national study found that less than half of residential substance abuse treatment programs had an aftercare component. “Continuity of care is an important element in treatment for offenders and is strongly linked to reductions in recidivism and drug use.”⁶⁰

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The case management component provides a trained experienced staff member to work exclusively to coordinate and plan for the treatment client's return to the community. This process should begin at intake and continue throughout the full continuum of care. The complexity of transitioning clients from residential status to community-based services, such as housing, medical services, employment, financial, and basic life skills services, requires an attention to these details to maximize the potential of relapse prevention. Consideration of the following will enhance success of this part of the programming efforts:

- Case management is a critical element in providing the linkages between effective treatment and transitional services.
- Residential aftercare (such as work release) should be provided to those who complete the treatment program.
- Community aftercare orientations should be provided, prior to release, to ensure that appropriate social service and treatment agencies link up with program completers to make certain continued care is provided upon release.
- Facilitated by community corrections staff, therapeutic community members should be enabled and encouraged to join together to support each other following release.
- Community groups linked to the program can host social events that are alcohol and drug free.

A study of the effectiveness of the Colorado DOC Arrowhead Correctional Center and the Peer I Therapeutic Communities (TC) highlighted the value a comprehensive aftercare component could have on lowering recidivism.⁶¹ This study compared recidivism rates of offenders who only completed a TC program while at the Arrowhead facility; those who received only aftercare services through the community based Peer I program of the University of Colorado; those who completed both TC programs; and those who received no treatment from either program. The results showed a two-year recidivism rate (i.e., return to prison) of 49% for those completing the prison TC only, 54% for those completing the Peer I only and 33% for those who completed both programs. Those who received no treatment (i.e., control group) had a recidivism rate of 58%.⁶²

Evidence-Based Substance Abuse Treatment Practices

The following program modalities are identified as evidence-based by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.⁶³

Living In Balance (LIB)

This is a manual-based, comprehensive addiction treatment program that emphasizes relapse prevention. LIB consists of a series of 1.5 to 2-hour psycho-educational and experiential training sessions. LIB can be delivered on an individual basis or in group settings with relaxation exercises, role-play exercises, discussions, and workbook exercises. The experiential or interactive sessions are designed to enhance the client's level of functioning in certain key life areas that are often neglected with prolonged drug use. These sessions include a large amount of role-play with time to actively process personal issues and learn how to cope with everyday stressors.

Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT)

This is a systematic treatment strategy that seeks to decrease recidivism among juvenile and adult criminal offenders by increasing moral reasoning. The cognitive-behavioral approach combines elements from a variety of psychological traditions to progressively address ego, social, moral, and positive behavioral growth. MRT takes the form of group and individual counseling using structured group exercises and prescribed homework assignments. Participants meet in groups once or twice weekly and can complete all steps of the MRT program in a minimum of three to six months.

Texas Christian University's Mapping-Enhanced Counseling

This approach serves as a communication and decision-making technique designed to support delivery of treatment services by improving client and counselor interactions. Mapping-Enhanced Counseling is the cognitive centerpiece for an adaptive approach to addiction treatment that incorporates client assessments of needs and progress with the planning and delivery of interventions targeted to client readiness, engagement, and life skills-building stages of recovery. The technique centers on the use of "node-link" maps to depict interrelationships among people, events, actions, thoughts, and feelings that underlie negative circumstances and the search for potential solutions.

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COST/BENEFIT

Adherence to the core principles of educational and substance abuse treatment programs will reduce recidivism. However, program integrity demands that there be ongoing staff training and audits of program standards and outcomes by independent evaluators (e.g. the Correctional Educational Association) to validate compliance and assure the proper use of what works in the chosen program model.

Critical to the effectiveness of correctional education programs are teaching staff who are certified, are appropriately trained, are experienced in working with offender populations, can follow standard curricula with structured modules, and possess the appropriate counseling skills.

Offenders should also be evaluated and monitored according to their established Individual Treatment Plan goals to ensure that they receive adequate and appropriate programming. Effective case management requires that changes in offender criminogenic factors be monitored while the offender completes the program. Additionally, post-program client outcomes must be collected to determine whether changes need to be made to program modalities.

The costs and benefits are clear. In the end, the argument is simple enough:

- Reducing recidivism through educational and substance abuse programs drives down the long-term cost of running a prison system.
- Equipping offenders to take a productive role in the economy upon release quickly pays for itself by giving them the opportunity to contribute to society in a meaningful and constructive way and by providing an incentive not to reoffend and end up back in prison.

CONCLUSION

While the primary role of a correctional institution will continue to be providing safety and security, corrections is taking on a new purpose. The most meaningful, long-range measure of any prison's real effectiveness is, and ought to be, success in reducing the number of offenders who are re-incarcerated once they are released.

Educational and substance abuse programs quickly pay for themselves in lower costs of community policing, prosecution, and incarceration. For prisoner and society alike, it is a win-win proposition. By allocating the funds for educational and substance abuse programs now, the massive, certain, and continuing costs of recidivism later can be significantly reduced. Research points to the effectiveness of these programs and a better return on prison investments.

For educational and treatment programs to succeed in significantly reducing recidivism, upper prison management must support these programs. Prison management must ensure that inmates are actively engaged in these educational and skill-building interventions with minimal disruptions in their daily routine.

While education and substance abuse treatment are clearly important, basic needs such as housing, job training, employment, positive social and family support, obtaining a driver's license, and financial assistance, are also often identified as needs to be met.⁶⁴

In this light, it is irresponsible, even in tough economic times, for correction officials to make fiscal and policy decisions that altogether eliminate or trim educational and treatment programming from prison budgets. Greater levels of accountability, through the use of performance based measurement, for educational and substance abuse treatment resources provided to corrections will improve the return on the investment, reduce the number of victims, and provide the type of safety and security discussed in most correctional system mission statements.



Appendix A: Parameters and Dimensions of Effective Programs

Parameters and dimensions of effective programs ⁶⁵

1. Leadership and Development

- a. The program director meets certain qualifications (that is, education and experience) and is involved in the programming activity, as well as selects, trains and supervises staff.
- b. Program development includes a pilot protocol and literature search demonstrating evidence of a consistent model applied throughout the program, verification and understanding of the model by staff, and articulation of a theory (e.g. cognitive behavioral theory). The program will have an effective model in all aspects.
- c. The program has stable funding and is supported by the criminal justice community and members of the community at-large (e.g. volunteers, religious and neighborhood groups).

2. Staffing

- a. Staff have been hired as a result of their skills and values supportive of the offender treatment needs.
- b. More than 70% of the treatment/professional staff have an associate degree or higher in such fields as counseling, criminal justice, psychology, etc.
- c. At least 75% of the staff worked in treatment programs with offenders at least two years.
- d. Staff meet regularly and are assessed to ensure their delivery skills have impact. Staff also receive clinical supervision and training.

3. Offender Assessment

- a. Offenders are determined appropriate for the program through a validated assessment which determines risk and criminogenic factors. The assessment protocol also brings out offender personal characteristics.

4. Treatment

- a. The programming targets offender criminogenic issues such as attitudes, feelings, peer associations, anger, truthfulness, self-control, problem solving skills, conflict resolution, family, motivation, etc.
- b. An effective treatment model is used throughout the core programming (e.g. structured social learning, cognitive behavioral).
- c. Treatment programs are delivered consistent with a detailed program manual and offenders are involved in the program tasks and activities about 40% of their time per week for an average of between 3 and 9 months, but not longer than 12 months.
- d. Offenders are separated by risk levels, with higher risk offenders receiving more intensive treatment.
- e. Protocols include efforts to match program staff with offenders and their learning styles, functioning levels, etc.
- f. Staff are assigned to groups and activities based on their skills, experience, etc.
- g. Offenders are given an opportunity to provide input on their programming.
- h. In addition to sanctions, institutional systems should include positive reinforcement through a range of rewards, preferably in a ratio of 1:4 (sanctions to rewards).
- i. Program completion is a result of defined progress in achieving individualized goals (e.g. pro-social behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, skill modeling, training, etc.). Completion rates should range between 65% and 85%.

5. Quality Assurance

- a. The program includes an audit system which monitors staff and service providers and offender group activity, participant satisfaction, offender reassessment, and recidivism.
- b. The facility has an evaluator to collect and monitor data as well as evaluate the overall program. Underlying the philosophy is that institutions must provide quality programs that serve the whole person. Prison life must effectively provide offenders with quality personal growth opportunities. Positive correctional experiences change offender values, habits, and skills, allowing them to return to their communities as productive, law-abiding citizens.

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ADDITIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH

Effective education programs must be designed to match “different learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and multiple literacies” of inmates (Vacca, 2004, p. 302). It is suggested that as stakeholders, the inmates be involved in the planning and implementation of educational programs (Gee, 2006). Other variables that contribute to the success of educational programs are the quality of teaching staff, resources for staff and supplies, and the overall correctional facility environment (O’Neill, MacKenzie, & Bierie, 2007; Vacca, 2004).

In response to this need, Rio Salado College (Arizona) developed a degree pathway specifically for incarcerated students that recognize the credits earned from the on-site occupational programs coupled with the general education requirements that are offered via distance learning (Jorgenson, 2009). The core component of the program, entitled Workforce Development and Community Reentry, is a 13-credit certificate that teaches incarcerated students the specific skills needed to effectively transition from incarceration to the community. Courses focus on job readiness and preparation, job retention skills, family reunification, personal and social skill development, and substance abuse education. The entire certificate is available to students via a print-based distance-learning format, making it available nationally and internationally. Moreover, the courses were developed with the assistance of a former inmate, who transitioned from prison more than a decade ago, earned her Master’s degree in counseling and psychology, and is now teaching incarcerated students (Jorgenson, 2009).

The literature on correctional education and treatment for inmates of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds is scant. As noted by Reif, Horgan, and Ritter (2008), this issue is particularly important at this time given the increasing Hispanic population in the United States. In addition, there is a growing need for English as a Second Language (ESL) programs in many correctional populations (Dellicarpini, 2006). Dellicarpini discusses the additional issues and challenges for many incarcerated non-native speakers of English enrolled in correctional education programs and provides suggestions for implementing ESL components into existing programs.

Studies of inmate perceptions of their correctional education report that students understand the connection between education and success after release (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006; Moeller, Day, & Rivera, 2004). The literature suggests that inmates are generally pleased with their education programs. In a study comparing perceptions of participants in vocational programs and academic programs academic students reported an increase in self-esteem as the primary motivation for their program participation (Tewksbury & Stengel, 2006).

Further, in a study about the influence of post-secondary education on the successful transition of releasing women, the researcher noted that while skill-building is essential to financial stability after release, success was predicated on the transformation of women’s views or ways of knowing themselves and others (Jorgenson, 2008).

There is evidence that post-secondary education has “a substantially stronger negative impact on recidivism hazard rates than do other forms of correctional education (e.g., high school, GED, vocation)” (Batiuk, Lahm, McKeever, Wilcox, & Wilcox, 2005, p.55). A meta-analysis of studies published or reported between 1990 and 1999 using Post-Secondary Correctional Education (PSCE) and recidivism as the criteria found that inmates who participated in PSCE courses had a recidivism rate of 22%, compared to a rate of 41% for inmates who did not participate in PSCE courses (Chappell, 2004).

Post-Secondary Education through the mail or via the Internet can support an array of options

The Rio Salado College (in Arizona) offers the Incarcerated Reentry Program as courses through the Maricopa Community College District (Jorgenson, 2009). This program facilitates multiple educational pathways for incarcerated students to earn certificate and associate degrees. In recognition of the research pointing to the diverse needs of those who will be returning to their communities, Rio has developed programs and courses designed to specifically address juvenile and adult incarcerated student’s unique challenges following release. Rio also offers hands-on technical skill-building opportunities by simulating real-work environments within the prison facility or in the community for those students who are minimum-custody. In collaboration with the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, Rio has tailored their online delivery system to provide Internet-based classes to eligible youth statewide.

Appendix B: Educational Program Research and Information

Jo Jorgenson related that while her study did not statistically or intentionally compare the effect of different delivery modalities, the participants came from prisons where a combination of traditional classroom and distance-learning classes were offered or only distance-learning was available. The critical element appeared to be the institution's commitment to giving students the opportunity to study and interact with others in formal or informal study groups, along with the responsiveness of the instructor, either via classroom feedback or mail.

Further, Jo Jorgenson advised that while time left to complete a program has merit, some programs and/or courses allow students to continue their coursework after release. By working creatively and collaboratively, educators and administrators could coordinate a "bridge" for students from prison to community that gives them an avenue for successful course completion after release. Additionally, some education in prison is better than none, and a distance-learning modality follows the student whether they transfer or release. The key is to make sure their materials follow them (a prison administration role) and the educating institution is notified of the change. Then, it becomes the role of the educator to be responsive to the student and encourage completion. This can be accomplished through different college resources. Finally, at Rio Salado College, as in many colleges across the country, students may enroll in classes every Monday – 50 start dates yearly – whether in prison or in the community!

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Programs that Help Offenders Stay Out of Prison

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