

Applied Research Project

University of West Florida

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Introduction

The criminal justice system is flawed in the way it handles sentencing and punishment. The prison system is essentially a “revolving door” for offenders. The focus of the system appears to be solely on the punishment of the offender; but what happens when that person is released back into society?

A person who spends time in prison has had to adapt to the “prison lifestyle.” In essence, prisoners trust no one, go through withdrawal, and eventually must join part of the hierarchy of the prison life in order to survive (Clear and Cole, 2003). Clear and Cole refer to Donald Clemmer’s ideology of prisonization as the way a new inmate adapts to prison and how he learns the culture. Prison is a world of its own: it has its own culture, its own language, its own policies, and its own “corrections” system. A person who has fully adapted to this lifestyle will find it very difficult to successfully function once released into society. In prison, the offender relied on the members of his gang for protection and acceptance. He relied on bribes and blackmail to get what he wanted. Much of the violence behind bars goes undetected and unpunished. This is the type of person that will be released back into society: a misguided person full of confusion and anger. It is no wonder why many offenders, once out of prison, re-offend and end up back behind bars. The big question is – with the way the system is now, should society expect anything more?

What makes a person become an offender? What makes a person become a repeat offender? Does the repetition ever stop? Kurlychek, Brame, and Brushway (2006) say that the risk of recidivism declines as the time goes on; more so as the time since the last offense lengthens. The majority of juvenile delinquents do *not* go on to become repeat offenders. “Only about 5% to 10% of young offenders actually go on to become ‘chronic’ criminals over time”

(Kurlychek et al., p. 486). Although only a handful of juveniles go on to become repeat criminals, there are some risk factors that contribute to recidivism that will be discussed in length later. Kubrin and Stewart (2006) identify low income housing and the lack of employment, treatment, and education as red flags to identify repeat offenders. This paper outlines a program that addresses the above problems and hopefully makes productive citizens out of ex-offenders.

Statement of Problem

The rehabilitation and reentry programs currently being implemented in the system are not sufficiently effective in “fixing” the problems many inmates have. Rehabilitation and reentry programs should target the areas that are most troublesome to the inmates and attempt to remedy them. For instance, many inmates lack a decent education, social skills, and vocational skills. If these types of programs become successful it will not only help the inmates live a better life, but also reduce recidivism rates. It has been stated that 600,000 prisoners are released into society every year (Kubrin and Stewart, 2006). Not only are the ex-offenders struggling to survive in a society that does not want them, but the communities are struggling with how to cope with accepting an ex-offender. Many people would rather not give offenders a second chance and are not willing to allow them in their communities. This is just a small example of the mountain of obstacles the offenders have to get through once released from prison.

Zehr (1995) describes prison as an atmosphere that teaches and nourishes violence. In a typical day an inmate relies on violence just to survive. “Violence may become for him a way of coping, a way of solving problems, a way of communicating” (Zehr, p. 35). Human beings tend to become creatures of habit. Many people have a daily routine. Sometimes when a person gets upset he takes a hot bath or a walk to cool down. For an offender who has been “prizonized” it may be normal to act out in violence when upset. This will only lead to trouble once released

back into society. A well implemented and successful program needs to be in place to help the offender transition back into society.

Is it possible to alleviate the problems of transitioning? Is it possible to set up a program that will guide not only the offender, but the community as well? This paper will review research regarding rehabilitation and reentry programs, what works, what does not work, and the major problems facing ex-prisoners today. The purpose of this paper is to outline a program that will provide for a smoother and more effective reentry for ex-offenders into society.

Literature Review

The problems with rehabilitation were inflamed decades ago with an American sociologist, Robert Martinson. Sarre (1999) states that Martinson, after evaluating rehabilitation programs, published an article saying that it was virtually impossible to rehabilitate prison inmates; basically “nothing works.” Since this article was released there has been a black cloud of doubt and hesitancy around rehabilitation efforts. However, there *were* some problems with Martinson’s research.

It is said that Martinson and his colleagues (Lipton and Wilks) only evaluated programs that were very limited, had small budgets, and were poorly implemented (Sarre, 1999). The programs that were evaluated were doomed to fail from the beginning, and many think that they were chosen thus. The programs that were “seemingly successful” were not included in the research. Also, it must be noted that the programs that were evaluated only dealt with rehabilitating criminals inside the prison, but did not focus on how to transition those skills into the outside world (Sarre). The program outlined later will focus on the transition outside of prison as well as inside.

Since 1974, much research has been done on the positive effects of rehabilitation. Unfortunately, the buzz was so high on the Martinson article that no one was listening to the evaluations that showed hope in rehabilitation programs. Martinson, becoming known to his peers as an ineffective researcher attempted to recant his earlier statements of rehabilitation having "...no appreciable effect of recidivism" (Martinson, 1974, p. 25) and "... [with] our present strategies... [we] cannot overcome, or even appreciably reduce, the powerful tendencies of offenders to continue in criminal behavior" (Martinson, p. 49). However, because of the aforementioned buzz surrounding the topic, no one was listening to him anymore. Martinson, a manic depressive, ended his life by jumping out of a window in his Manhattan apartment while his teenage son was in the room (Sarre, 1999).

Even though the "nothing works" philosophy was obviously flawed, people still continued to believe it. Finally, in 1989 rehabilitation was abandoned by the United States Supreme Court (Miller, 1989).

In *Mistretta v. United States*, the Court upheld federal 'sentencing guidelines' which remove rehabilitation from serious consideration when sentencing offenders. Defendants will henceforth be sentenced strictly for the crime, with no recognition given to such factors as amenability to treatment, personal and family history, previous efforts to rehabilitate oneself, or possible alternatives to prison (p. 1).

Also, in order to defend these new guidelines, the Court outlined the history of rehabilitation:

Rehabilitation as a sound penological theory came to be questioned and, in any event, was regarded by some as an unattainable goal for most cases. The Court cited a Senate Report which referred to the 'outmoded rehabilitation model' for federal criminal

sentencing, and recognized that the efforts of the criminal justice system to achieve rehabilitation of offenders had failed (p. 1).

Many people were under the impression that rehabilitation was “soft” and pointless. Others began riding on the coattails of Martinson’s study and began using the “nothing works” philosophy to back up their own conservative views. It was stated by Harvard management professor James Q. Wilson, and conservative writer, Ernest van den Haag, that since nothing works the system must move to “deter and incapacitate them [offenders] through harsher prison sentences and occasional use of the death penalty” (Miller, p. 2). Thus, began an era of mandatory sentencing guidelines and incapacitation.

In the late 1980s more research was done on rehabilitation and the outcome was very different. Martinson’s research was flawed and the validity was compromised; therefore the results were not credible. This new research found that many rehabilitation efforts were successful. However, it still carried “mistrust in its effectiveness” (Sarre, 1999, p. 4). The new research was based on a survey of 200 studies of rehabilitation efforts and projects over a six year period. Since this was a decade older than the Martinson studies new mathematical methodology was used. Sarre stated the findings of this research:

Our reviews of the research literature demonstrated that successful rehabilitation of offenders had been accomplished, and continued to be accomplished quite well...[R]eductions in recidivism, sometimes as substantial as 80 percent, had been achieved in a considerable number of well-controlled studies. Effective programs were conducted in a variety of community and (to a lesser degree) institutional settings, involving pre-delinquents, hard-core adolescent offenders, and recidivistic adult offenders, including criminal heroin addicts. The results of these programs were not

short-lived; follow-up periods of at least two years were not uncommon, and several studies reported even longer follow-ups” (p. 4).

Although rehabilitation still had a long way to go, it appeared there was light at the end of the tunnel.

Miller (1989) said that, “Where there is a wide adversity of strong alternatives, recidivism can be lowered. Where there is little choice, recidivism remains the same or increases” (p. 4). In other words, when people have very few skills, are unemployed, no support system, and nowhere productive to live they are more likely to revert back to their old criminal lives. In order to develop a new program for success it is crucial to first examine what makes some people more likely to offend and re-offend than others.

People who live in lower income neighborhoods and abuse drugs and alcohol are most likely to become criminals (Shrum, 2004). Therefore, if that statement is true, the ex-offenders who return to their prior environments are most likely to recidivate. Kubrin and Stewart (2006) identify specific barriers to successful ex-offender reintegration. These barriers are finding housing, securing employment, receiving treatment, and complying with the terms of supervision. Aside from parole officers, the system has little to do with helping offenders adjust to being back into society. Where are the ex-offenders going to live? How will they get a job with a criminal record? Where can they find proper treatment? Can they even afford the treatment? Without this help, how can they comply with their supervision?

Many people answer this question with, “Who cares? If I can live in society peacefully, they should be able to also.” While to some, that reasoning is understandable. But what those people do not realize is the money they pay into taxes is going to continually punish the same offenders who are part of the “revolving door.” Would it not be nice if those ex-offenders could

become productive members of society who are paying taxes instead of increasing taxes? That may be a better way to view this situation than to just shrug it off and say, “Not my problem!” In fact, it costs \$100,000 for one cell in a prison to be built and one inmate costs \$30-50,000 per year (Shrum, 2004). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the prison population was roughly 2.2 million at the end of 2005. That adds up to a lot of money.

The most difficult barrier for reintegration is securing employment (Kubrin and Stewart, 2006). Very few inmates receive any type of technical or vocational training in prison and 79% of the total inmate population is without a high school diploma (Vacca, 2004). The workforce today is technologically demanding and more and more employers are requiring higher levels of education. Sixty percent of inmates said that some of their income came from illegal activity, and 29% of those inmates said that ALL of their income was illegally obtained (Kubrin and Stewart). With that being said, it is imperative that inmates do not return to their previous neighborhood. As Kubrin and Stewart have stated, neighborhood characteristics directly affect the rate of an individual’s recidivism, even after receiving treatment and training.

Low income neighborhoods seem to be breeding grounds for offending. “Poverty, joblessness, welfare assistance and the like represent conditions that make readjustment into society and one’s community more difficult, and thus contribute to a greater likelihood of offending after release [from prison]” (Kubrin and Stewart, 2006, p. 168). If the offender goes back into this type of neighborhood he would have a very difficult time reintegrating in a successful way that is crime free. A program that implements transition housing into its system may remedy this.

Kubrin and Stewart (2006) conducted a study in Multnomah County, Oregon, using data for offenders about to be released into society. The researchers used a sample of 4,630 former

inmates and tracked where they lived upon release from prison. By using the type of neighborhood an ex-offender returned to (poverty, joblessness, etc), the researchers tracked how many of them re-offended within one year. The study shows that 28% were re-arrested within one year and 68% were rearrested within three years. The study concluded that living in a disadvantaged neighborhood is a risk factor that increases the odds of recidivism above and beyond individual-level attributes.

Not only does it appear that neighborhoods affect the reintegration of offenders back into society, but education level is another major problem. According to Shrum (2004) a study found that the recidivism rate for inmates who completed their GED and a vocational trade was over 20% lower than for those who had not accomplished either. Also, those inmates who obtained a college degree were less likely to recidivate. Shrum also notes that the higher the education level obtained the less likely to recidivate (those with a Bachelors degree are less likely to recidivate than those with an Associates degree, etc). Maybe education is the key to keeping people from continuously committing crimes.

There are many problems with the prisoner education system. The largest problem prisons face is the lack of funds for educational programs (Vacca, 2004). Much of the financing earmarked for these programs has been taken away and put to “better” use by either the prison itself or the state. Oftentimes this happens because the programs are appearing to fail. “Program success or failure is hampered, however, by the values and attitudes of those in the authority position, overcrowded prison population conditions and inadequate funding for teaching personnel, supplies, and materials” (p. 297). Also, according to Byrne and Taxman (2005) federal agencies have been using the majority of their funding to fight the war on drugs and the war on crime by funding deterrence-based research. These programs have very little expectancy

for success when implemented in such a poor manner and operating with less than standard supplies.

Vacca (2004) also found that an education program is directly related to the influence, values, and attitudes of those in authority positions. It all boils down to what is the perceived purpose of corrections: security, control, punishment, or rehabilitation. Without the necessary and proper skills, training, and education to become prosperous citizens, the offenders are fighting an uphill battle. Not only do they lack the aforementioned, but they are carrying the stigma of “ex-con” or “inmate” for the rest of their lives.

Prison overcrowding has also become one of the most pressing issues regarding the effectiveness of prison education programs. Vacca (2004) said that in the twelve years between 1980 and 1992 the prison population increased by *160 percent*. This increase has directly affected the amount of funding the prison has available for educational programs.

More than half the prison population is illiterate or has less than an eighth grade education (Vacca, 2004). The majority of these inmates battle self-esteem issues and are hesitant to involve themselves in any type of class where they may be ridiculed. As mentioned earlier in this paper, many inmates are school dropouts. The inmates blame their decision on everything but themselves: poor socioeconomic conditions, poor role models, poor attendance, and misbehavior in schools as youths (Vacca). This is also a factor they attribute to turning to criminal behavior. With the conditions they lived in and the lack of role models that were available they perceived no other prospects.

The question that still remains is what should the system do in order to implement successful education programs? Vacca (2004) says that prison literacy programs should be centered on the learner and implemented to successfully work within the prison culture. After

all, there are different styles of learning and different backgrounds. The programs should require the student to participate to help them find their own unique way of learning. Simple lectures are not likely to be effective; the lessons need to be engaging and motivational. Vacca also notes that it might be useful to use literature that is written by the prisoners themselves because it will provide relevant subject matter and can be looked at as a writing model. It is also very important that the prisoner can envision himself as something greater than an inmate. This gives insight to what type of subject matter might appeal to the inmates, and discussed later will be ways around the aforementioned problems of funding and personnel issues. Once the prison authorities are willing to help with the program and all of these issues are addressed it may be possible to successfully develop education programs inside of prisons.

Aside from discussing what makes a successful reentry programs, it is also important to discuss what makes *unsuccessful* reentry programs. Project Greenlight is a great example of what does not work. According to Bobbit and Nelson (2004) from the Vera Institute of Justice, this project "...explore[s] how family involvement in reentry may lead to more successful transitions from prison and better recidivism results" (p. 1). Other disciplines have studied family involvement in helping troubled individuals and have found it to be successful. In fact, research conducted in past decades shows a significant difference in recidivism rates in inmates who showed a close bond with family while inside prison: those who show little to no involvement with family have a greater chance of recidivism (Bobbit and Nelson). In one study, the greater number of visits inmates had, the lower their recidivism rate. In another study, inmates' participation in a private family visiting program during incarceration was associated with low recidivism rates.

Project Greenlight is part of the research that has recently been in demand. It is difficult to find research done on reentry, but it is becoming a more “in demand” area of study.

According to the Vera Institute of Justice in 2006, this research has been following the ideology that inmates should use the time spent in prison to prepare themselves for release and involve them with services they will need upon returning to communities. This ideal makes sense, since most inmates are not serving life in prison without parole or on death row. Most will, someday, be getting out of prison. What then?

Bobbit and Nelson (2004) describe Project Greenlight as follows:

“...a prison-based reentry pilot program ...Greenlight participants were adult males, incarcerated for a variety of offenses (some for serious and violent crimes), who were transferred to a prison in New York City, the Queensboro Correctional Facility, two months before their release” (p. 3).

The inmates were set up with a plan for reentry into society, workshops on readiness, practical skills, and cognitive-behavioral skills. Services were also offered to the inmates in the form of job selecting, counseling, and housing.

After following the ex-offenders through their reentry process for one year, Wilson and Davis (the researchers) found that this program did *not* reduce recidivism; in fact, it was shown to possibly *increase* it (Visher, 2006). Other scholars who have reviewed this program and its outcomes have hypothesized that the project was poorly implemented, had poor integrity, poor design, poor treatment, and the evidence that led them to believe would be effective was incorrect. Three outcomes of this project were noted:

1. If an intervention is poorly conceived or poorly implemented, the program is unlikely to be successful.

2. Negative results can inform both policy and practice. It is possible to learn more from failure than success.
3. The results of this project may encourage public and private funders to expand and build on this project.

The results may also show the project is unable to be salvaged and would be better off terminated. While this area of research is greatly expanding it appears much of the prior research lacks clarity and credibility. However, programs like Project Greenlight can be existentially informative – either in failure or success.

There are some critiques that immediately come to mind upon review of the project. Is it realistic to change a lifetime of bad habits in a two month time period? Many sessions with counselors or family members were held once a week for a month. How productive can that be? Many inmates have severe and deep problems that can not be substantially affected in such a short period of time. The project also had a difficult time getting inmates to volunteer for the program. Bobbit and Nelson (2004) report that only 30 percent of Project Greenlight's population participated in the family program for reentry. Also, the campaign for funding is difficult and it becomes a challenge to actually get the amount of money needed to fund a project like this.

Recently, Congress has voted not to reestablish federal financial aid to offender populations (Linton, 2005). While reestablishing federal financial aid has been unsuccessful, the Second Chance Act of 2005 is still being pushed through Congress. According to the Reentry Policy Council the Second Chance Act (SCA) is federal reentry legislation designed to ensure the safe and successful return of prisoners to the community. The SCA does this through addressing problems with reentry programs by authorizing grants and federal funds to help find

employment, housing, substance abuse and mental health treatment, and children and family services for those who need it. There was a statement in the Council's website made by Massachusetts State Representative Mike Festa, "There is a growing need to address rising prison populations and high recidivism rates. The reintroduction of the [SCA] sends a strong message of federal support for re-entry initiatives that have already begun to develop at the state and local levels" (p. 1).

The SCA would be a great start in helping introduce funds to the reentry programs. It would also stimulate political support for something that can ultimately, if done properly, help save thousands of dollars in taxpayers' money and keep repeat offenders out of prison and on the right path. Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, on her website, says that nearly two-thirds of released state prisoners will recidivate within three years of release. She also states that the SCA will put nearly *\$360 million* towards reentry programs. That support is desperately needed for reentry programs to succeed.

Methodology

The proposed program that this paper identifies is a Longitudinal Reentry program. The study will last roughly five years; beginning two years pre-release and three years post-release. It is important to begin the study two years pre-release in order to correctly identify the problems the inmates have and give enough time to successfully work on fixing them. It is also important to follow up with the program for three years post-release in order to have enough time to sponsor the ex-offenders and help them reintegrate back into society without going back to old habits. Kurlychek et al (2006) said that the longer an individual is able to live without recidivating, the better his chances are of living a crime-free life. Project Greenlight only gave

the offenders two months pre-release treatment and followed the ex-offenders for one year after. The Longitudinal study will attempt to remedy the timing difficulties.

The researcher has contacted Menard Correctional Center (MCC), located in Menard County, IL, to pilot this program. The warden and State officials have agreed to allow this prison to be used for the program. According to the Illinois Department of Corrections, MCC is a maximum security and high medium security prison. It is the second oldest prison in Illinois and boasts the state's largest maximum-security prison. The prison officials have agreed to screen the inmates so that those eligible to participate in the program will be coming into their last two years of incarceration. In order to inform the prisoners that there is a program available for them, information packets will be shared with those identified by the prison officials that are in their last two years of incarceration. Along with the two year eligibility, both violent and non-violent offenders will be included. Exclusions will consist of sex offenders, those with mental illnesses, and those who have a history of bad behavior in prison. The program will include those prisoners who have had good behavior for the last year of their incarceration and who state that they are truly interested in making a change in their lives.

The prison staff has agreed to explain the packet to any of the inmates who are unable to read or need further explanation. The packet (See Appendix 1) will inform the inmates on the criteria for selection, the different areas of the program, and what happens upon release. This way the inmate can make an informed decision on whether or not he wishes to participate. Once those that are eligible have been identified the prison staff has agreed to make a list of those inmates who are interested in being a part of the program. Lastly, the prison officials will use systematic random sampling that will result in a maximum of 25 participants.

Since going back into their previous neighborhoods has proven to be problematic and symptomatic of recidivism, the program has found placement in a halfway house located in a working class community on the outskirts of St. Louis, Mo. This area is full of employment for tradesman and is mainly a blue collar area. The housing will be available to the ex-offender for three years after release. Counselors will be working with the community and with the ex-offenders to help establish employment, help them cope with their new freedoms, and work with them on various life skills projects (e.g. resumes, interviews, checking accounts, etc). The researcher has also contacted graduate students at St. Louis University, asking for volunteers to help with the program. The volunteers consist of future educators and future psychologists.

Then inmates will then be evaluated based on their answers to the questionnaire (See Appendix 2) that will specifically ask the inmates what *they* think *they* need to survive in the world. Education? Social skills? Vocational skills? Also, once that is finished, volunteer counselors will meet with each inmate to determine which areas they fit into and which areas they need to work on. Prior to implementing this program counselors held a town meeting where the halfway house is located. While some members of the community were unwilling to participate, the majority were willing to assist the program. The community can be an integral part of the program by keeping an eye on the streets, supplying employment (farmers, grocers, landscapers, etc), and even helping the ex-offenders understand what it is like to be a part of a productive community. Through the town meeting the community was informed of the Longitudinal program; how it works, what has been happening, what needs to happen, the role the community can play; and the outcomes the program expects.

After evaluating the offenders to decide what they need medically, physically, and psychologically, they will be placed in the appropriate areas of the program. This program will

identify five areas of treatment that are most pressing pre-release. These are substance abuse treatment, counseling, education, vocational training, and life skills. Many offenders will likely be placed in all five areas. Substance abuse treatments can be formulated to help those who need short-term help or those dealing with much bigger addictions and needing more long term help. It could be the difference between a twelve step program and a more intense, longer program that could take as long as needed to finish. The programs will consist of admitting to addictions and counseling on why they use and why they abuse. The programs will also teach positive coping methods with the stressors that are facilitating the addictions.

Many of the offenders will need some type of counseling. Many offenders come from low socioeconomic areas and have grown up with a life of crime. Positive role models were non-existent and the highest paying job in the area was to become a drug dealer. These offenders may have had many traumatic violent events in their life that are hindering their development into a successful human being; whether they had a crack addicted mother, witnessed murders, or even participated in murders. Counseling will attempt to help them recognize what in their life has had a major impact on their lives, how they feel about it, and how to cope with it in the future. The counselors will also focus on areas of family problems and self-esteem issues which plague many of the inmates.

One of the most important areas will be educating the inmates. Many inmates are illiterate or have only an eighth grade education. In today's technology laden society, it is a must to have an education in order to succeed in life. While some inmates will need basic education, many others may be interested in earning a higher education degree. As mentioned earlier, the higher the degree the less likely an ex-offender is to recidivate.

Finally, life skills will be taught to the inmates. It is possible many of the inmates have never set up a checking or savings account at a bank or even written a check. Life skills that will be taught are basic financial management: how to balance a checkbook, how to pay bills on time, how to set up a checking account, how to save money, and how to do it all in a legitimate manner.

Vocational training will be very important for many of the inmates. This, aside from education, can be the experience they need to obtain and keep employment. Training will be in several disciplines including mechanics, plumbing, construction, and landscaping. Several professionals in the aforementioned disciplines have agreed to mentor and tutor the inmates both pre- and post-release. This program will continue for two years pre-release and help to give the inmates the skills they need to *begin* to integrate into society.

Hopefully after three years of continued treatment, counseling, and education the ex-offenders will have learned enough skills to survive outside of the housing programs without recidivating. Hopefully, the ex-offenders will have come to understand, through the help of the community, the repercussions criminal acts have on the victim, the offender, and the community. The ex-offenders will be able to hold a steady job, cope with the stresses of life, and live in society peacefully.

At the end of the program the researcher will ask the ex-offenders for their opinion on the program. Hopefully this information will help future studies and help the program to become more successful in the future. In measuring the outcomes of the program the researcher will consider the program a success if one third of the participants are able to stay employed for at least one year, have at least completed a GED, and have been able to find housing on their own all without recidivating.

Expected Findings

After the program comes to completion it is expected that one third of the ex-offenders will have the vocational and social skills, as well as the education to function productively in society. Society will have a better tolerance for acceptance and a better education on labeling. There will be less recidivism overall that will eventually help to reduce prison overcrowding. In fact, according to the prior research of Kubrin and Stewart (2006) it is possible to reduce recidivism by up to 68%. Ex-offenders will receive support from their families and will strive to make a better life for themselves. The ex-offenders will hopefully attempt to stay away from the “bad” neighborhoods and strive for something better.

It is expected that some of the participants will continue beyond their GED, others may continue on with their vocational training and become masters at what they do. Some may obtain steady employment that is outside of their vocational training. It is also expected that the majority of the “success stories” may become involved with teaching other offenders how to stay crime and drug free. The researcher hopes that the majority of the ex-offenders realize the impact crime has on loved ones and society

Policy Implications

There are changes that will need to be made for this program to be successful. First and foremost, the prison officials will need to change their attitudes towards the purpose of the prison. Yes, prison is a place where people are punished. Since many of those people will be released, it also needs to be a place for rehabilitation. Prison officials will need to support reentry programs and be willing to help researchers with these programs. They are more likely to be helpful because this program may improve the prison environment because of the criteria for the program and it will also cost them no money and very little effort. Inmates will also need to

be informed of their options. They will need to have a change in attitude and be more open to rehabilitation programs and becoming serious about turning their lives around.

In order for the program to become a reality, the reentry program would need to get financial support from SCA. Also, treatment and psychological counselors as well as instructors will need to be willing to work in a prison environment voluntarily and be available to follow this program through completion. The community will be urged to be open minded in helping rehabilitate these offenders and help them to reintegrate back into society.

Aside from who will be directly affected by the proposed program, changes on a much broader spectrum can be made. These are recommendations for judges, wardens and police chiefs. In 2003, it was said by Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy that prison terms are too long and that he favors scrapping the practice of setting mandatory minimum sentences for some federal crimes (Gearan, 2003). In fact, the American Society of Criminology recommended “expanding drug courts, alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders, and community-based sentencing and treatment for those arrested for drug crimes” (Shrum, 2004, 234). The entire system will need to rethink the role of prisons as rehabilitative in nature rather than strictly punishment.

Moreover, Shrum (2004) also says that 90% of prison wardens supported more use of alternatives to incarceration including drug treatment, vocational training, and literacy. Sixty percent of police chiefs have said that drug users should be put in court-supervised treatment programs instead of jail or prison. It appears that among many of the criminal justice officials the use of alternative punishments is favored. Finally, Shrum says, “Longer prison terms may provide some additional incapacitation effects, but they do so at great cost to our social-economic system and at the expense of more effective alternatives that make our communities

safer (p. 234). Once a reentry program is successful, it will be in the best interest of the system to rethink their attitude toward the purpose of prison.

Conclusion

The goal of this program has many different facets. The program hopes to be successful in helping troubled individuals find their way in life and find where they fit in successfully with society. Education is the key: knowledge *is* power. It is important to find out why these inmates are choosing to commit crimes and help them understand that there is another way of life.

The program is also focused on reducing the populations in the prisons. It is accepted that there are individuals out there that may be incapable of living a better life and may be too disturbed to fix. It is acknowledged that some people do belong in prison. For those people, incapacitation and punishment may be the only way to “fix” them. Others may have hope. Aside from reducing the populations, the goal of this program is to reduce tax dollars going to punish the same offenders over and over again. Instead, those tax dollars can go towards treating a person in need. Hopefully the program will be able to accomplish all of the above and help to reform the system from being purely punishing and lean more towards rehabilitative.

Appendix I

Longitudinal Reentry Program

This is a program designed to support inmates through their last 2 years of incarceration and into the first 3 years of reintegration. The program will offer evaluations of inmates and will place appropriately into different areas of the program:

- ✚ Substance abuse treatment
- ✚ Counseling
- ✚ Education
- ✚ Vocational skills
- ✚ Life skills

The program will also provide housing via a halfway house in the St. Louis Metro Area. Criteria for eligibility are as follows:

- ✚ In the last 2 years of incarceration
- ✚ Voluntarily and willing to participate
- ✚ Serious about making a productive change
- ✚ Good behavior within the previous year of incarceration

The program will **NOT** accept those who fit into the following criteria:

- ✚ Sex offenders
- ✚ Inmates with mental issues
- ✚ Inmates with bad behavior within the previous year of incarceration

Appendix 2

Reentry Program Questionnaire

1. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
2. Do you think a better education may help you to succeed in life? Y/N
3. Do you think you could benefit from vocational training? Y/N
4. Would you be willing to enter into a program and follow the rules? Y/N
5. Do you think you could benefit from personal counseling? Y/N
6. Do you have a substance abuse problem? Y/N
7. How would you rate your social skills (interviewing, communicating, etc)?
 - a. Excellent
 - b. Good
 - c. Fair
 - d. Poor
8. How interested in turning your life around are you?
 - a. Very
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. Very little
 - d. Not at all
9. What skills do you think you will need in order to refrain from recidivating?
10. Do you think you would benefit from substance abuse treatment?

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