

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Alternative Education Overview:
Juvenile Justice Institutions
(Long-term Locked Facilities)

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~ Introduction, Session 6~ Lecture Notes

Objectives: Students will understand what constitutes long term detention as well as become aware of various program options for juvenile offenders.

Despite recent drops in juvenile crime, including violent juvenile crime, there is little dispute among experts, policymakers, and the general public that the rates of juvenile crime and violence remain too high. Juveniles are not just the perpetrators, however, they are also the victims. Juveniles are more than two-and-a-half times more likely to be the victims of violent crime than adults. While the recent decreases are encouraging, much remains to be done. The good news is that Governors and policymakers now have more information available to them as they strive to design more effective treatment and prevention strategies. Through rigorous evaluations, research has begun to identify which program models and strategies reduce crime and violence and which do not. This research can help policymakers make critical funding decisions. For example, understanding that the majority of juvenile crime—especially violent juvenile crime—is committed by a minority of youth suggests that there is a need for effective identification and differentiation strategies and targeted high-impact efforts. Targeted interventions aimed at this small group of juvenile offenders will conceivably have the greatest impact on crime reduction and maximization of resources. There is also a strong link between child abuse and neglect and later violent offenses. While not all abused or neglected youth become offenders, an overwhelming percentage of violent youth come from abusive backgrounds. Any comprehensive violence reduction strategy should also look at ways to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Understanding the factors that increase a youth's chance for becoming violent is important. It is equally important however, to understand the factors that decrease the chances of a youth becoming violent. Regardless of risk, most youth do not commit violence. Rather, they are protected by a source of personal assets that keep them from

offending. State strategies that recognize the role and influence of risk factors, yet build upon the characteristics of youth which protect them from risk, hold the key to a long-term, comprehensive violence reduction strategy. The majority of juvenile crime is committed by a minority of youth. For example, the juvenile violent crime index for 1995 indicates that less than one half of one percent of juveniles were responsible for all indexed violent crimes that year. (Source: Dealing with Violent Juvenile Offenders Executive Summary: H. N. Synder, Juvenile Justice Bulletin: Juvenile Arrests 1995, February).

Though many offenders in long term lock down facilities are violent a number of wards are incarcerated for myriad reasons such as drug violations. Long term lock down facilities have specialized programs to assist youth with drug violations as well as other programs associated with a specific need. Youth that have committed crimes that are non-violent in nature are often separated from more violent offenders. Rehabilitative efforts aimed specifically at less violent incarcerated population seem to produce greater gains. The following is an overview of youth detention and parole services.

YOUTH DETENTION FACILITIES

Youth detention facilities house juvenile offenders between the ages of 12-25. The offender is usually committed to a long-term lock down facility by the juvenile court. They may also be tried as an adult and committed to a youth detention facility by a criminal court. Some offenders are tried as an adult and committed to a state Department of Corrections but ordered to serve time in a youth detention facility. Offenders that been committed to a long-term locked facility may be transferred to an adult facility on or before their 18th birthday. The District Attorney's Office or the Probation Department in the county from which the offender was committed can provide information regarding why the offender was sent to a youth detention facility. It is important to note that youth detention facilities are designed to deal with juvenile criminal offenders who have been committed **by the court**. These facilities are **not** designed to deal with "truant or troublesome" juveniles.

Each state has a number of institutions and camps that house offenders. For instance, the California Youth Authority has 11 institutions and four youth forestry camps that house nearly 6,300 offenders. Each offender is assigned to a program based on his or her age, maturity level, educational needs, program availability and the seriousness of their committing offense. The institutions and camps are located throughout an offender's home state.

There are many special programs in the youth detention facilities

that the offender may be assigned to, including Young Men As Fathers classes, sex offender treatment, substance abuse treatment, anger management, victims awareness activities and specialized programs for the seriously emotionally disturbed. Every effort is made to address individual behaviors through specialized programs.

Offenders are usually required to attend school full-time. Those that complete their high school education may participate in a college program, vocational training or a combination of both. Many are assigned paid jobs within the institution, such as landscaping, food preparation or janitorial work. If they receive wages, some of those funds are collected to pay their court-ordered restitution.

Offenders are often required to participate in the Impact of Crime on Victims or Restorative Justice Programs which addresses the impact their crimes have had on their victims, their families and the community. In most institutions a youth counselor is assigned to each offender. Individual and small group counseling gives an offender with an opportunity to gain insight into the causes of one's behavior. The counselor monitors the youth offender's institutional program and reports that progress to a Parole Board.

Institutional Culture

Though youth detention facilities provide viable programs to help youthful offenders become successful in life, one must not forget that this is jail. Techniques used to control behavior are omnipresent—lines, cuffs, armed guards, and sirens. Control tends to over ride education, and youth in detention facilities are often denied due process rights i.e., did the youth actually do what he was charged for, was a hearing held to determine the specification of the allegation. In many cases untrained staff administer punishment without a clear understanding of the nature of the conflict or the situation. Wards are at the mercy of the adults that supervise them. As a result they learn adaptive skills such as passivity, deceptive, ingratiating, protection from a gang in order to survive. The flip side of the coin involves supportive institutional practices geared to help a ward become successful in life.

Supportive Institutional Practices

Each state youth detention facility has an impressive array of programs to help wards become more productive socially and academically. The following is a list of programs offered by the California Youth Authority to support and help youthful offenders. While in the CYA, an individual may obtain the following:

- High School Diploma
- General Educational Development Certificate (GED)

- High School Equivalency Certificate
- College course work for an Associate of Arts (AA) Degree
- Work Experience

The following Education Services are also available:

- Basic skills of reading, math and language
- Special Education for Individuals with Exceptional Needs
- English Language Program-English Language Learners

Juvenile detention facilities offer specialized programs. These programs have been developed for individuals whose treatment needs cannot be met solely in a Basic Core Program or who may benefit from specialized treatment. For example, the California Youth Authority offer the following specialized programs:

- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Formalized Treatment - there are 15 formalized drug and alcohol abuse treatment programs in institutions and camps. One drug treatment program (Karl Holton School) provides a more intensive program for wards that have the most serious histories of chemical abuse.
- Fire Suppression and Public Service Camps
- Medical/Psychiatric-Intensive Treatment -- to provide services for wards with serious emotional problems, integrating psychotherapy with the usual core components of ward programming (education, recreation, etc.).
- Non-Violent Offender
- Parole Violator
- Planned Re-Entry Program (PREP) - short-term intensive counseling program for less serious, less sophisticated wards.
- Pre-Camp Training
- Psychiatric Hospitalization
- Sex Offender Support, Counseling
- Specialized Counseling
- Female Program
- Ward Aide
- Work Experience/Youth Services
- Younger Boys Support

Specialized programs assist youth in becoming responsible citizens. With direct and ongoing support the likelihood increases that juvenile offenders with become successful.

PAROLE

Each offender usually appears before a Parole Board shortly after

they arrive in youth detention facility. At that time, an Initial Hearing is conducted where a Parole Board reviews the case and orders the type of program the offender must complete. In addition, the Parole Board indicates the date the offender can be considered for release to parole. Keep in mind that their parole consideration date may change depending on how well or how poorly they are doing in the institution. **NOTE:** Parole boards, parole agents, and parole decisions vary from state to state.

In most states, an offender's case is reviewed by a Parole Board to assess their progress. If the offender behaves well in the institution and successfully completes all program goals that were ordered by the Parole Board, they can be considered for release to parole. They are generally not considered for release to parole, however, until they have served a set amount of time.

Some offenders may be permitted to participate in a furlough program after they have successfully served the majority of their confinement time. Furloughs serve as an opportunity for the offender to gain work experience or live in a structured setting prior to their release to parole. The Parole Board must approve all furloughs.

During the month the offender is scheduled to appear before a Parole Board for their Parole Hearing, the ward can be recommended for release to parole if they have successfully completed all of their program goals. At their Parole Hearing, the offender meets with the Parole Board to discuss their progress.

It is the responsibility of the Parole Board to determine their readiness for parole. If the offender is to be released to parole, the Parole Board may impose "special conditions" of parole, in addition to establishing the standard rules which include paying restitution, maintaining contact with their parole agent, submitting to searches and not leaving the state without permission. Special conditions of parole are specifically ordered according to the individual needs of the case and may include participating in counseling or substance abuse treatment, testing for possible substance abuse not associating with negative peers, and earning a high school diploma or equivalent.

State Department of Corrections offenders housed in a youth detention facility are usually released to parole when their fixed sentence has been served. The youth detention facility provides parole supervision for Department of Corrections offenders. In some cases, State Department of Corrections offenders are transferred to state prison where they will complete the remainder of their sentence. The youth detention facility no longer has responsibility for these offenders.

The offender is assigned a parole agent who is required to monitor the offender's progress and to help them become productive and law-abiding members of the community. Many parole offices provide offenders with educational and employment opportunities, counseling, substance abuse treatment, parenting programs and life skills training.

If an offender commits a new crime, or if they violate their conditions of parole, their parole may be revoked.

If parole is revoked, the offender will be returned to an institutional setting for continued treatment and training.

Most states have a maximum amount of jurisdiction time that expires on either their 21st or their 25th birthday, depending on the seriousness of the crime they committed.

For example, offenders committed to the California Youth Authority (CYA) can earn an honorable discharge if they perform well on parole and pay off all of their court-ordered restitution. They may also be dishonorably discharged if they do not do well by the time the CYA's jurisdiction ends or if they are convicted of a new crime. The offender can earn an early discharge from parole supervision if they perform well on parole for a significant period of time and pay off their restitution in full. For a CDC offender housed in the CYA, parole may be from 1-3 years.

A Parole Board provides a range of training and treatment services for youthful offenders committed by courts. They can direct offenders to participate in community and victim restoration, assist local justice agencies with efforts to control crime and delinquency; and encourage the development of state and local programs to prevent crime and delinquency.

Education programs provide essential services to each youthful offender through three components - academic, career/vocational and character education. The Education Program operates 12 months a year, enabling a student, who has fallen behind academically, the opportunity to catch up. A wide variety of vocational programs and work assignments are available, teaching relevant skills, which are transferable to community employment. These work assignments also provide an emphasis on improvement of attitude and behaviors that have previously impeded employment success.

Supportive Parole Practices

The parole system provides specific levels of service to the parolee based on protection of the community and the parolee's individual needs. Initial supervision and support is intensive. As the parolee demonstrates

the ability to successfully reintegrate into the community, supervision and support levels may be reduced. Immediately prior to release on parole, a parolee will be assessed and assigned to one of the following levels of support and supervision:

- Intensive Re-entry Supervision and related services - designed to provide enhanced supervision and support services during the critical transition period from institution to community living.
- Regular Re-entry Supervision and related services - designed for those parolees that require the enhanced services for a shorter period of time.
- Specialized Supervision - to provide concentrated, intensive services to parolees with special needs, e.g., severe substance abuse, sex offenders, those with mental health problems, those requiring specialized placement and/or parolees heavily involved in gang activity.
- Case Management Supervision - parolees are transitioned to this level when they have demonstrated the ability to function in the community with reduced supervision and services.
- Electronically Enhanced Supervision - at any time a parolee's supervision may be more highly-structured with the use of a 24-hour electronic monitoring device.
- In Lieu of Revocation Residential Drug Treatment Program - two 90-day programs--one north and one south--which offer parole violators who have relapsed into the use of substance abuse the opportunity to obtain treatment in lieu of returning to a Youth Authority institution for a six month to one year revocation.
- Subsistence and Personal Care Services - services include but are not limited to out-of-home placement, cash, clothing and transportation assistance, counseling, parenting education and other essential support services.
- Employment and Job Placement Project - an interagency agreement between the Youth Authority and the Employment Development Department (EDD) and a series of contracts with local vendors to provide parolees with intensive job placement services.
- Volunteer attorneys who serve as mentors to parolees.

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