

Standards for moral conduct in criminal justice

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



I have become in fascinated with the way that the criminal justice field works. There are so many different career opportunities that one can get apply to. The field of work that I feel would be best for me will be a juvenile probationer officer. I do feel that being in this line of work will benefit me as well as the juveniles that I can work with. I will be able to help those individuals that have gotten into trouble and help them turn their life around and do positive things that will benefit them in the long run.

Job Description

To begin, a juvenile probation officer (JPO) is an individual who has the authority to “ supervise youth who have been delinquent or undisciplined in court and who are placed on probation or protective supervision by the presiding judge and being able “ work closely with law enforcement, social services, schools, and parents to help juveniles become successful”. In this field of work, the probation officers’ primary task is to supervise the youth on their caseloads for compliance with the court’s orders. Normally the tasks involved are “ regular visits to the juvenile’s home, school, work, and other areas of the community in which the juvenile frequents”. This is a way for the officer to see inside the world of the juvenile. They are able to see where they live and what factors are playing a role in their behavior. These visits could possibly range from weekly as well as monthly visits. This will be determined based off of the supervision level given by the court. These visits can also include “ unannounced visits to check compliance with curfew, to conduct random drug screens, and to monitor the whereabouts of the juveniles”. During this time, the officer will give referral information that will assist with the intervention plan for the juvenile and his or her parents. And if

for some reason the juvenile “ is placed on electric monitoring, the JPO will also install the equipment, attach the monitor, and track the juvenile’s activities”.

Stakeholders

When it comes to the stakeholders that are involved with this career, there are a few. The stakeholders are individuals that stay on the local system for the adoption of new reforms. The stakeholders can be district attorneys, judges, directors of child welfare agencies, as well as probation officers or chiefs. These individuals along, have sessions to discuss what is the best way to handle the juvenile system. The overall goal is to decrease crime and lower the costs of juvenile defendants.

Ethical Decision Making & Moral Action

In the field of juvenile probation officers, there are many types of issues that could possibly come about. First, one has to understand that they are dealing with a child. Second, this child belongs to someone that most likely cares for them and want them to get the proper help. And third, one has to have some form of understanding when dealing with the different types of juveniles that come before them. So one scenario would be how to handle a juvenile that is quite disrespectful and out of control. Another scenario can be how could I handle a juvenile that thinks they know everything and we as authority figures can’t tell them anything. They are right and everyone is wrong. And a third scenario can be how to deal with a juvenile that has gotten their first offense and is not sure of the rules and regulations. As we know, working with juveniles can be a task. With the fact that they are somewhat of age but have managed to follow the wrong crowd, can be

difficult at times to get them to understand they are making very bad decisions. So being a probationer officer, this becomes a task of almost trying to re-raise an individual that has been taught all wrong.

Ethical Theories

Due to the fact that probation officers deal with many types of individuals, one has to have some ethical theories in place to follow. There are times when one theory might not be compatible with the type of individual you are dealing with. Probation officers have to be prepared at all times. One theory that I could apply to this line of work would be the deontological theory. This theory judges the morality of an action based on the action's adherence to a rule or rules. Basically this is an ethics of duty or obligation. With this theory, I am very well capable of informing juveniles the rules and regulations. There will be a clear understanding that the rules provided will be followed or there will be consequences. Now as always, there are advantages and disadvantages to using certain methods.

Now a few of the pros of deontological theory is that the information given is straightforward. That basically means there will be no cutting of the corners. There is simply one principal as the moral test of all actions. The rules will be followed. Another pro is that it carries an intuitive appeal. We feel that we should be respected at all times. Regardless of the situation, the respect has to be acknowledged. There are also cons to this theory as well. One con is the "act-to-produce-the-best-consequences". This simply means that no matter what, the outcome must have a great consequence. That means that if a juvenile has violated probation a certain number of times, the

consequence for that action has to be the best. This could simply mean jail time for that juvenile. Another con would be that this theory has to deal with conflict that seem to exist between duties and between certain rights. This basically means that conflict of one's duties is inconceivable. There is not a chance that the rules laid out would be broken.

Getting more into the theories, I would also use the virtue theory. Virtue theory " judges a person by his/her character rather than by the action that may deviate from his/her normal behavior" " It takes the person's morals, reputation and motivation into account when rating an unusual and irregular behavior that is considered unethical". Overall, one would be able to look into the past of the juvenile to see how this person normally acts. One might also be able to determine the cause of why the juvenile ended up going down the path he or she did. The advantage for this theory is that the focus will switch for moral value rather than from the act. Simply put, I would rather judge on what I know about the behavior of the individual than the crime that was committed. Another advantage is that there is an opportunity to learn and improve one's moral life. I am sure that there is a way to help this juvenile get on the right track and to avoid breaking the law in the future.

Well, unfortunately, there are also disadvantages or cons to this theory. One of these disadvantages is " that it does not take into consideration a person's change in moral character". We know that once we know a character of a person, we want to believe that person will always maintain that character. But there are times when a person can get caught up with

the wrong crowd and their whole demeanor will change forever. Another disadvantage would be that virtue ethics does not seem to have room for basic concepts such as rights and obligations. One will seem very inadequate in dealing with big issues. Well in this case, a person would have a difficult time with giving the consequence of the offender's actions. They can only see the good and not the bad.

Code of Ethics

When it comes to creating a code of ethics, I would want to make sure that it will cover exactly how my organization will be defined. A code of ethics is an overview of what the organization stands for and what the organization as a whole is trying to achieve. It will detail " how professionals are supposed to approach problems, the ethical principles based on the organization's core values and the standards to which the professional is held". One of code of ethics would be that professional service will be rendered to the justice system and to the community assuring the social adjustment for an offender. Another code will be that we must abide by all federal laws, federal guidelines and rules, and state laws. I would want to make sure that all officers follow rules to avoid misconduct. A third code would be that we as an organization " will uphold the law with dignity, displaying an awareness of our responsibility to offenders while recognizing the right of the public to be safeguarded from criminal activity". We will also respect and protect the legal rights of all juveniles and their parents and/or guardians. Regardless of the offender's reason for being there, they should always be respected as well as their rights protected. One has to remember that we are dealing with young individuals.

I will also want to enforce to serve each child with concern for their welfare with no expectation of personal gain. Simply put, do what is best for that child without wanting to be recognized for the work you pledged to do. And a final code would be to treat all juveniles and their families with courtesy, consideration, and dignity. We must remember that we are all human, we are not perfect. There will come a time when we all will make a mistake so we should not judge.

Best Practices

Overall, I would want to make sure that everyone involved with the juveniles are following the same rules and regulation. I would want to make sure that there is a best-practice checklist that one will familiarize themselves with on a daily basis. So to begin, the first on the checklist would be to concentrate on having juveniles being able to understand and relate to the thinking process that warrant negative behavior. Second, we want to promote strong bonds with, and respect for, the other member of his or her family, peers, school, and any other individuals that deal with them on a daily basis. Third, have a comprehensive and understandable path for the juvenile's progression towards completion. Fourth, have constant rules in place in the event of misbehavior and rewards for good behavior. Fifth, " provide an assortment of highly structured programming activities, including education and/or hands-on vocational training and skill development. Sixth, facilitate discussions that promote family problem solving. Last but not least, integrate delinquent and at-risk youth into generally prosocial groups to prevent the development of delinquent peer groups".

Implications

The goal with this checklist is to make sure that we can get these juveniles on the right path. They need individuals that can understand and relate to them. They are also looking to be able to trust the individual they are dealing with. When you are able to have compassion and understanding with these juveniles, you will have a better outcome of them opening up to you. And by giving them positive options rather than being in the street, they might also feel a sort of security with you. They will start to put their trust in you.

Having positive outlets will always lead to more getting out of the delinquent life style and trying to better them in a positive way.

Conclusion

In the end, I am sure that my code of ethics will have a positive impact on all the stakeholders. With the fact that all times, we as a whole will always render a professional service. That means at all times, attitudes will be professional regardless of the situation at hand. Also with the fact that all laws, federal and state, will be followed. There will be no corner cutting when it comes to following the rules. And if for some reason any wants not to abide by those rules, there will be consequences. Also, when it comes to the juveniles, we will make sure that their legal rights are protected. Just because they have broken the law, we will treat them with respect and make sure they are protected. But most importantly, we will always be concerned for the welfare of that child. One can appreciate the fact that these children will be taken care of and treated with respect. As I stated earlier, we all make mistakes and dealing with probation system is a way to get that second chance on life. Regardless of what has transpired, the juvenile will be

able to start making better decisions to improve a healthy and positive lifestyle.

I do believe that these codes will greatly please the stakeholders. They will have a complete understanding of the goals that we as an organization are trying to fulfil. There will also be an understanding that these juveniles will be treated with the upmost respect and that their wellbeing is our number one concern. But most of all, we are here for them to be able to acknowledge their wrong doings and understand the consequences of their actions. This will be the first step to getting them back on the right track and understanding that there are more positive things you can do with your life besides being in trouble with the law.

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