

Alternatives to incarceration

Law



Incarceration is the state of confinement where non violent offenders could be exposed to hostile environment. Alternative programs provide better rehabilitation and successful reintegration to society. Some of them are controversial. One is less successful than the others. Incarceration is the state of confining an individual who committed a crime to prison for a certain period of time. The main purpose is rehabilitation.

The offenders have the chance to correct the mistakes and upon release, the successful reintegration to society. The justice system upholds the protection and safety of men, women and children. It enforces social control by penalizing criminals who violated the law. Without the effective justice system, society will be in chaos with criminals running amok and on a wild spree for victims. Incarceration will serve as punishment for unmitigated violence. (Champion, D. 1994)

However incarceration per se is not the answer especially for non violent or first time offenders since prison is a favorable place to adapt hostile behavior with hardcore criminals lurking around. Alternative programs were introduced reduce crime, cut prison costs, help people and communities, build better societies. The programs best serve the purpose of rehabilitation and successful reintegration of offenders to society. It also reduces recidivism. Recidivism is a form of relapse where convicted criminal upon prison release reverts back in committing the same or other crime.

The reason is due to series of failures; failure of the individual to avoid trouble, failure of the institution to provide the right program for rehabilitation, failure of society to embrace the offender back in its arms, failure of the family to provide the necessary emotional support, failure of the

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individual to rehabilitate himself, failure of the individual to avoid committing the same or other crime after prison release. (Matlz, Michael D. 1984p1)

Parole and probation officers are relevant and alternative programs produced great impact on the roles, responsibilities and difficulties of these officers as well as their supervision tasks. Officers have to conduct strict surveillance deterring the offenders to commit the same of other crime. They have to facilitate work oreducationdepending on the need. This is time consuming and emotionally exhausting. However success of the alternative program will serve as a personal triumph and sense of accomplishment Special needs population affect offender's supervision and this includes the juveniles.

Parole officers should exercise high level of flexibility in dealing with juveniles without compromising their competence. Approach should be dynamic recognizing individual need (Rutherford, A. 1992). They have to talk to the families and friends. They have to seek assistance of school administration in case the juveniles are attending a learning program or went back to class. Talk to counselors if offenders are undergoing counseling therapy, talk to religious or civic group if offenders are providing community based service.

This will help in monitoring the progress of offenders However, violation of the program's terms and conditions will force the officer to make the necessary recommending that is sending the offenders to prison. The major tasks of parole and probation officers are the rehabilitation and successful integration of offenders to society. They need to set out a solid plan. There aregoalsand expectations. They are under political and public scrutiny. These <https://assignbuster.com/alternatives-to-incarceration-research-paper-samples/>

officers suffer from external and internal pressure, they have to deliver good outcome, they have to satisfy the family, the public, the institution, the offenders as well as themselves.

All these could lead to stress and burn out. Various alternative programs provide positive impacts. Community based service, offenders are sent to work like graffiti cleaning, lawn mowing, sorting books at the public library, cleaning up of parks. This will help them actively participate in the community and help reach out to with society. Acceptance is an important factor. Families, peers, religious and civic groups play an important role. The primary goal is community service and safety. Work is unpaid.

However, this is therapeutic and enhances self esteem. (Day, J. , Laufer, W. , 1987) Literature programs provide classroom training and enhance mental skills. This environment reduces personal stress and offers relief and comfort. It bolsters teacher student relationship. The offenders can mingle with other students. They can pursue an education for career development later. This facilitates a straight path where offenders become goal oriented enhanced by books and learning. Education has been the best weapon in fighting ignorance.

It makes juveniles stay out of trouble and make them healthy members of the school and community. House arrest allows the offenders to sustain employment and family relationship. They are given freedom of mobility however their movements are restricted and under strict supervision. This is also known as electronic surveillance. A device is attached to the body mostly the ankle so location and whereabouts are monitored. House arrest

provides reduction of high prison cost. (Jungen_Tas, J, Onderzoek, W 1994)
Counseling therapy is effective for juvenile delinquents.

There is interaction between counselor and offenders. Juveniles are given listening ears where they could express current emotions as well problems in the past that lead them to commit the offense. This could be performed individually, in group or together with the family. The success will depend on the willingness of the offenders to open up and accept the counsels to be provided. What programs are controversial and why? Boot Camp is also known as shock incarceration, offenders undergo rigorous training similar to the military.

This serves well with juvenile offenders. They learn discipline, patience and team work. It enables them to gain selfrespect and develop effective ways of interacting with others. However boot camp is defiled by controversies. Some critics said that participants become frustrated and hostile due to the military way of instigating discipline. There were instances of deaths in boot camps. Drug courts and treatments is another controversial program because some offenders are forced to undergo drug rehabilitation without their consent.

Substance abuse has been a perennial problem of any society however it will need a deeper analysis to check if the drug use is the root or mere manifestation of an underlying problem that needs serious treatment. Least successful of the programs is restitution. This is for cases of petty theft or stealing small amount of money, the offender is ordered to return the money to the victim. Rather than serving time in jail this program drastically

reduces prison cost. However, this is the least successful among alternative programs due to the inability of the offender to give the money back.

Offenders committing petty crime are members of the indigent population with no monetary capabilities. Whatever alternative program best suits the offenders, the goal is to make him or her better member of society. Family, peers and the community will need to work together to facilitate adjustment and healing. Parole and probation officers are guides and mentors. These special need population suffer from emotional imbalance. They are outcast and needs care and understanding. But with proper nurture they could always go back to society.

It will take time to regain the much needed respect however through patience, hard work and support there will always be a second chance.

Reference List
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