

# Cj210 functions of the us correctional system



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Running Header: FUNCTIONS OF THE US 1 Functions of the US Correctional System Tracy Kelly Kaplan University CJ101-02 December 18, 2011 Professor Patricia Dahl FUNCTIONS OF THE US CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM2 Functions of the US Correctional System The United States correction system was created to protect society from criminals. There are many ways in which the system can do this; punishment, incapacitation, rehabilitation, deterrence, and restitution. Two ways serve as specific functions to the criminal - punishment and rehabilitation. Many in society believe that " an eye for an eye" should still be the case.

Many others believe that a second chance is more beneficial to the offender and society. In either case, the issue of money and justice are key factors. The criminal justice system is at a loss about which way is better. One way will keep the criminal off the street and locked up which in turn causes overpopulation in prisons. Rehabilitation, on the other hand, seems like a " slap on the hand" and more justice for the criminal than the victim (Schmallegger. 2010). Our correctional system should punish criminals based on priority. This means what are we hoping to tell the offender, and at what expense.

Many years the answer to punishment meant prisons and probation. However, this answer does not seem to be working as effective as one would hope. If it did, there should not be the problem of prison overcrowding and repeat offenders. Prisons and punishment should be harsher, uncomfortable, and uninviting while making the criminal suffer for his or her crime. Other forms of punishment include community service, restitution, court fees, boot camps, and home electronic monitoring devices. Although these forms may

not seem harsh FUNCTIONS OF THE US CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM3 nough, they offer an alternative to prison sentences. Many times, these forms make an example out of the offender while giving back to the community. The United States correctional system also uses rehabilitation when dealing with offenders. Rehabilitation seems to be the most effective way to handle criminals. Helping a criminal become a productive, responsible member of society is not possible for everyone. Simply locking one up does not teach a lesson, rehabilitation should be taught to all offenders. Prisons currently offer rehabilitation by allowing prisoners earned opportunities to make self-improvement.

This is done by providing education to obtain a GED, offering counseling services, substance abuse treatment, and vocational training. Effective intervention is attainable. This is validated with the America people referring to prisons as “ correctional facilities”. The purpose of the criminal justice system is to enforce the laws already established, protect society and citizens from crime, punish those who are convicted of breaking the law, and ensure no person of being imprisoned for falsely accused (Schmallegger. 2010). The criminal court system is designed to determine the innocence or guilt of the accused.

It is also the responsibility of the criminal court system to determine the punishment of those found guilty. Almost everyone can agree that a consequence is necessary for a criminal’s action. I believe that every person deserves a second chance with the exception of a rapist or murderer. There are many underlying factors that enable a person to commit a crime. Finding the enabling factor should be the priority to reduce or diminish the possibility

of it enabling again. FUNCTIONS OF THE US CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM<sup>4</sup> Justice means a balance of law and order, individual rights, fairness, upholding the law, and equality.

This should be interpreted with both the criminal and victim in mind.

Punishing a person who may or may not have known or understood fully the extent of his or her actions could be warranted with rehabilitation as opposed to a lengthy incarceration. Probation, restitution, victim awareness classes, and counseling could be the needs of rehabilitation. A first time offender, regardless of age and in consideration of the crime committed should not be thrown away from society. Rehabilitation can and will work if done properly, effectively, and with a specific purpose in mind (Shea. 008). A repeat offender should not be given the same leniency as a first time offender, regardless of the crime committed. A harsher sentence should be issued with a mandatory incarceration period of a minimum of 6 months. Punishment can include rehabilitation. Rehabilitation may be considered punishment. The two do go hand-in-hand with the exception of the success rate. Whether individually ordered or jointly performed, the success rate of rehabilitation is greater. Comparing the two functions, I believe that rehabilitation is most effective way to reduce crime.

Helping a criminal learn how to positively contribute to society once he or she is released not only offers hope, it offers a second chance. Yes, a criminal should be held accountable for his or her actions but this can and should be done without turning the offender more violent by harsh sentences (Cose. 2010). Although many believe severe punishment will deter crime, we cannot keep a person locked up forever. By providing criminals with

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educational and job skill opportunities, helping one overcome drug and alcohol dependencies, rehabilitation can work. Many criminals have the potential to be responsible, contributing members of society. I believe we should give them the tools they need through rehabilitation to lead productive lives.

References

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