

# Prison vs. mental institutions



Prison vs. Mental s/Community-based Mental Health Programs Lisa Ware

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### I. Background Information

It is such a biting consequence to have come to learn completely that roughly 16% of the two million U. S. prisoners by 2003 have been confirmed mentally ill according to the U. S. Bureau of Justice (Okasha, par. 2). This figure, that has a relatively varied through decades, is allusive of the mid-century turning point in the history of the nation's mental health sector with the aftermath of de-institutionalization which set some 100, 000 (Yglesias) mentally unstable patients free of institutionalized treatment the state budget used to cover. It was realized however that these individuals, due to partial and uncooperative neighborhood, could barely find proper settlements so the authorities saw it fit to incarcerate them with the law offenders instead of placing them back in mental hospitals. The inappropriate coexistence of prison inmates, both state and federal, with the psychologically sick ones to add to their number hence aggravates the latter's condition as revealed by case findings bearing statistical evidence.

### II. Critical Evaluation

Joanne Mariner, the article's author, is basically a lawyer and a human rights advocate whose main point of argument in this entry concentrates on expressing contempt against deliberate imprisonment of the mentally ill as

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well as her proposition of humane solutions which she necessitates for the legislators or justice officials to have reforms (Mariner) sought after.

Inevitably, this presentation has meant to empathize with the situation of its subject all throughout and reflects on the author's uplifting aim to grant it the highest, most favorable value possible it deserves.

Since the mentally ill have long suffered from not only having inadequate treatment, resources and poor facilities but also at getting worse due to unethical approach by prison staff whose custody fails to respectfully and dutifully address the major issue with their irrational dependents, J. Mariner signifies the need to divert solutions to a more resourceful and less expensive non-rigid community-based mental health treatment programs. Knowing that it is essential to give due recognition to every human being's rights and welfare, such programs would be inclined to seek genuine attention from voluntary individuals in the general public who'd be sold out to look after their unreasoning counterparts and so impart diligent involvement that is far from negligence, discrimination and abuse.

The overall tone and methodology used by the author may be said to have withstood exaggerating demands or unnecessary elaborations. In the effort to unify every critical perspective in her presentation, she makes it a point to sound constantly headed towards the main objective with a consistent level of enthusiasm built around the core. With the employment of a mode that leads to persuasion her article obviously finds crucial to meet, J. Mariner begins with being informative by briefly discussing a comprehensive statistical account to show how appalling the trend is of the dramatic growth in numbers of the mentally ill people put under incarceration. Even as she skips the mention of concrete cases, the gravity of her mere emphasis on

their existence through credible sources, suggests a population density of the untreated subjects that can no longer afford further neglect. As it places conditioning in the mind, the content is developed from declarative to persuasive work on shifting paradigm which is later to ignite its emotion with the intended perception that serves for the reader a driving force to cooperate with an active sense of commitment when capable.

In the process of breaking down particulars of her concern to explain why it makes all the more sense to remove the mentally ill from jail, she has enumerated factors which tend to reverse direction of treatment. Cited reports of assault, sexual abuse, exploitation, and extortion by fellow inmates and jail officers contribute to a rather worsening psychological deterioration than the benefit of recovery if at all likely. J. Mariner finds it unsuitable to obtain resolution with or prefer mental institution to prison considering impracticalities of state funding on the latter while the budget is moderately tight and that de-institutionalization has become a legally accepted, unbreakable habit. To conclude her essay therefore, she offers to vie for a whole new alternative of utilizing flexible communities to make treatment of the mentally erratic undoubtedly forward.

Except for the questions I could ponder to raise on the feasibility of her option for corrective measure, I'm with every side of her successful argument when it comes to moral issue underlying mental health. It has been enough told and confirmed that prison is not in any way conducive to treat the mentally ill for having unqualified staff who are deficient with psychiatric knowledge and skills and compassionate means to handle them. To think of a contradiction that qualifies to assess it with reasonable doubt is implausible especially with the presence of taunting inmates in an

unpropitious environment that has limited influential elements to enable sound cerebral functioning.

While re-institutionalization could help in a lot of wiser ways, the current state of economy might not be able to promise stable financial appropriation for its sustenance. On the other hand, living in a nation which tolerates an application that equates to criminalizing the mentally ill citizens as J. Mariner puts it, is imaginably despicable. Nothing can be more effectual than to expose mentally disordered individuals to public service in a community or setting where they can access greater stimuli to broaden the range of their responsive, normalized behavior and nourish their intellectual capacity since it can well execute assistance under movable constraints. Without walls and bars to be enclosed by, unlike in prison, an appreciably open place allows endless possibilities to exploring certain potentials as they perceive real support, protection, and fair and equal acknowledgment of rights with others. Mental health programs of this sort may then be predicted to warrant progress, and not adversity, to treatment of the mentally ill.

#### Works Cited

Mariner, Joanne. "Prisons as Mental Institutions: The Mass Incarceration of the Mentally Ill." FindLaw. 27 October 2003. Thomson Reuters. 3 November 2009. Okasha, Ahmed. "Mental patients in prisons: punishment versus treatment?" World Psychiatry. February 2004. PubMed Central. 3 November 2009. Yglesias, Matthew. "Prisons and Mental Institutions Revisited." YGLESIAS. 23 February 2009. Think Progress. 3 November 2009.