

Criminal justice (probation and parole)



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One of the most important aspects of the study of deviance and crime is rehabilitation. It is in rehabilitation that the deviator is “treated” or made to behave normally, according to the rules set by the society. There have been several theories that account for the importance and the effectiveness of rehabilitation. One of these is the social learning theory. Rehabilitation is one way of dealing with criminal behavior, as this allows the criminals to be reintegrated back into the society as law-abiding, productive and decent members of the society.

The social learning theory focuses on how behavior is learned from social experiences. Behavior is learned from one’s own social environment. An act of deviance becomes a norm if it is accepted by the society that the individual lives in. A norm becomes a norm when it is socially accepted. In rehabilitation, social learning is important. It is needed in order to re-establish the norms that the individual has to live with. The social learning theory explains that behavior can be learned according to modeling and reinforcement. Strong predictors of criminal behavior is said to be linked to parent-child interaction as it serves as the model behavior of an individual. If the social environment of an individual strongly suggests violence as a norm, then the behavior of the individual will tend towards acts of violence. Thus, in rehabilitation, criminals are presented proper norms of behavior through models and examples that are adherent to the norms of the society. Norms and accepted social values are presented to the criminals through socialization. In a rehabilitation program, these individuals are immersed in an environment where the rules are strongly structured to represent the parent-child interaction and social environment that will nurture positive values and behavior. Examples of programs that have relied upon the social

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learning theory are group therapies and peer programs. With this, it is believed that criminal behavior will be eliminated from the individual's system.

Another important aspect of rehabilitation is behavior modification. Behavior modification has its similarities with the social learning theory. This aims to modify the behavior of the criminal to re-establish proper behavior rather than deviant behavior. Rehabilitation aims to cure the criminal behavior through different processes such as social learning and behavior modification. It aims to modify or transform the criminal behavior into proper behavior that will be beneficial for the society. Believed to be a psychological disturbance, criminal behavior can be treated. Rehabilitation is believed to be a crime deterrent as it reinforces proper behavior through behavior modification. It does not mean that the individuals are re-created to be whole new individuals rather it focuses on changing the criminal behavior by re-establishing the proper social norms and values for the individual to accept and to live by.

Social learning theory and behavior modification is important in rehabilitation as rehabilitation seeks to change the way how a criminal behaves and lives. It is an important aspect of crime prevention and deterrent as it allows the society to see its effects on criminal behavior. With this, programs can be created to target social learning through different institutions, such as the family, school and religion.