

Program enhancement



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Program Enhancement Program Enhancement The program that will be discussed in this essay is the Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP). The IAP is a “research-based approach to transitioning youth from confinement back into the community” (The Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies, n. d.). The Program began in 1988 under the supervision of Dr. David Altschuler of the Johns Hopkins University, and Dr. Troy Armstrong of the California State University, Sacramento and is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (The Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies, n. d.).

The goal of the IAP is to “reduce recidivism among high-risk parolees by providing carefully targeted services and counseling to youthful offenders throughout correctional supervision, prerelease, community reentry, and community supervision” (National Institute of Justice, 1998). According to The Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies, the IAP is based on five underlying principles for reintegration for juveniles. These five principles are “(a) preparing youth for progressively increased responsibility and freedom in the community, (b) facilitating youth-community interaction and involvement, (c) working with both the offender and community support systems on qualities needed for constructive interaction and the youths’ successful return to the community, (d) developing new resources and supports where needed, and (e) monitoring and testing the youth’s and the community’s ability to work productively together” (The Center for Delinquency and Crime Policy Studies, n. d.).

The IAP was effective specifically in Colorado, one of the states which initially tested the program. The effectiveness of the IAP in Colorado can be attributed to the strong administrative support backed up by a well-trained

and committed staff who developed programs centered on a team approach (Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005).

In the case of Nevada, another state which tested the program, it was effective in giving the youth intensive community services. The design of the transition structure is noteworthy. One shortcoming of the IAP in Nevada was the high turnover of the liaison position; thus, hampering the coordination between IAP and the community provider networks, which facilitated the transition strategies (Wiebush, et al., 2005). Another problem which beset the program was the lack of involvement of the families of the juvenile.

To enhance the effectiveness of the IAP it is suggested that parental involvement should be increased (Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005). Family support is very much needed by juveniles in order to fully integrate into the community again. Parents are in the best position to monitor the activities of their juvenile child. Problems such as substance abuse may easily be monitored if parents are educated on the symptoms of drug abuse. Even if the community is all out to support them, the encouragement that will come from the parents is most important. It is therefore proposed that the IAP develop specific activities where both the parent and the juvenile have more interaction.

Another scheme that the IAP should adapt is to focus their efforts into promoting education among the juveniles (Wiebush, Wagner, McNulty, Wang, & Le, 2005). They should be persuaded to continue their education and emphasize its importance for their rehabilitation. Assistance should be given to them to go back to school. IAP should help out with the enrollment process and provide financial aid if necessary. For the academically-gifted juveniles, IAP must help them look for scholarship grants. This move will

assist the juveniles into developing their skills and talents and reach their highest potential. It will also prepare them for possible employment opportunities even before graduating.

References

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