

Juvenile re-entry programs

Psychology



Juvenile Re-Entry Programs Juvenile Re-Entry Programs Definition and of the Problem Newell and Salazar (2010) conducted a study that focused on the effectiveness of re-entry of juveniles who were previously incarcerated into society. Their report to the Second District of Los Angeles (LA) County in December 2010 indentified explicitly that there was eminent problems with regard to effectively addressing the needs of newly probated juveniles as they are reintegrated into the communities they previously belonged. Further, the issue likewise expounded on the need to “ achieve rehabilitation after incarceration” (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 7) The authors indicated that a successful re-entry has to ensure that newly reintegrated juveniles do not relapse into repeating criminal behavior or exhibit recidivism and at the same time, these juveniles should become productive citizens of the community. Currently, based on the authors’ research, the reentry program at LA County manifests deficiencies in terms of involving the family, deemed to be instrumental in influencing the youth into positive behavior. In addition, other concerns that exacerbate the currently identified problem are exemplified through “ poor mental health planning and insufficient record-keeping and sharing” (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 7). The problem identification finally required understanding the juvenile offenders through the provision and presentation of common characteristics and the factors that make integration to society challenging. Successful Re-entry Program in LA County A. Best Practices in Juvenile Re-entry The discussion on a successful reentry program was structured by Newell and Salazar (2010) through initially presenting the best practices in juvenile reentry that proffered the following framework, to wit: 1. Assessment and planning: the phase was further classified into evaluating pre- and post-release needs of

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the youth, the assessment findings, as well as the need to examine support on multidisciplinary perspectives. 2. Focus on transition: identified as the most crucial stage in the reentry which incorporates step down features, the involvement of the family and a continuity of care (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, pp. 11 - 12). 3. Individualized aftercare with youth development programming: the stage that requires designing strategies focusing on positive behavior enforcements, treatment of unique and distinct needs of the juvenile and a program of applying rewards and sanctions (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 12). 4. Implementation and evaluation: ensures that the reentry program is executed consistently and in full transparency. This framework for best practices emphasized the need for the reentry program to address the local population's concerns.

B. Barriers to Re-entry When compared to the abovementioned best practices framework, the LA County was deemed inefficient in the following areas contributing to barriers to reentry: Inadequate multidisciplinary transition planning that does not maximize full use of assessment information; Juveniles were found to be unprepared for reintegration to respective communities; The aftercare phase was reported to have limited emphasis on treatment to motivate the youth to adhere to terms of probation; There was lack of coordination between Probation Department and other crucial government and community agencies and institutions. There was a lack of ability to collect, maintain, and analyze data to monitor the performance of the reentry program.

Ideal Re-entry Program The ideal reentry program focus on the strengths of various innovative programs undertaken by LA County's Probation Department. Among the highlights that consider these ideal are as follows: Focus on treatment with classes in pro-social skills,

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anger management, and moral reasoning (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 23); Manifests strength in inter-agency collaboration and multidisciplinary approach on aftercase planning and continuous transition (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 24); Emphasis on involving family and improving the familial environment (ibid.); Focus on gang-members to transform their orientations into positive behavior; Linking education and employment initiatives through vigilance and monitoring; Building personal attitudes and behavior to increase self-confidence and esteem (Newell & Salazar, December 2010, p. 26). Conclusion The authors recommended various strategies to improve the current reentry program by focusing on areas where weaknesses and barriers have been determined. By following the best practices framework and the ideal reentry program models, it is envisioned that the juvenile reentry program would be improved to ensure that recidivism is prevented or at least minimized and that the youths under probation would be reintegrated with optimistic outlook to become productive members of the community. Reference Newell, M., & Salazar, A. (December 2010). Juvenile Reentry in Los Angeles County: An Exploration of Strengths, Barriers and Policy Options. Los Angeles: Harvard Kennedy School of Government.