

Involvement in Corrections

*William H. McKelvie
West Virginia University*

The concept of community involvement in correctional settings is not recent. In the early part of the nineteenth century a Boston shoemaker, John Augustus, offered to supervise offenders brought before local courts. Prior to his offer many of these men who had been charged with relatively minor offenses were sent to prison. Until recently the idea of having community volunteers work in the court has not been fully developed. Rather, the thrust in most progressive courts has been to develop a trained professional probation or parole officer to provide supervision for offenders released in the community. This inclination toward the concept of a corrections officer as a "professional" was a reflection of the attitude that only "trained" individuals could deal with the social and personal needs of the community. In corrections, however, the soaring crime rate made it clear that professionals were not the total solution. In 1967 the President's Crime Commission report concluded that:

What research is making increasingly clear is that the delinquent is not so much an act of individual deviancy as a pattern of behavior produced by a multitude of pervasive societal influences well beyond the reach of the actions of any judge, probation officer, correctional counselor, or psychiatrist. (1967, p. 80)

The Volunteer in Corrections

In 1959, Keith H. Leenhouts, a municipal judge in Royal Oak, Michigan, instructed volunteers from the community to work with juvenile offenders (Leenhouts, 1964). Since the initiation of this program the volunteer concept has spread at a surprising rate. In the Denver courts over one thousand volunteers have been trained for court work (Jorgensen, 1970). These volunteers are carrying out a wide variety of tasks and the recidivism rate of individuals supervised by the volunteers is lower than offenders not involved in the program (Bunnett, 1969). At present, a National Information Center on Volunteers in Courts (NICOVC) is located in Boulder, Colorado. Under the leadership of Dr. Ivan Scheier this organization provides a number of services to those interested in setting up volunteer programs in the courts. At present, NICOVC is establishing centers in all of the states which will disperse information, provide training, and evaluate resources for local volunteer programs.

Adlerian Involvement in Correctional Programs

Adler recognized that crime and delinquency were problems that had to be dealt with through community involvement. Basically, Adler postulated that criminals were demoralized individuals who had lost the courage to deal with the problems of life in a creative manner. The task of society was to demonstrate to this demoralized group how they could find their places as "fellow human beings." Punishment, Adler observed, would only increase the belief of the criminal "that he is a hero" (Adler, 1969). Thus one of the main trusts of

Adlerian Psychology has been to provide techniques to parents so that they could infuse in their children a feeling of being useful individuals who could make contributions to mankind. In working with all ages of offenders, Adlerians have continually emphasized the need to establish a meaningful relationship with individuals who have violated laws. Through this relationship offenders would be aided in examining more useful ways of living.

Several Adlerian based projects have received governmental support. In the Minneapolis - St. Paul area, Dr. and Mrs. Pew have initiated a comprehensive demonstration program for delinquency prevention. This program involves around Family Education Demonstration Centers which accept referrals from the court, school, and other community agencies of families "who appear to be in the greatest need of restorative and preventive services." The Alfred Adler Institute of Minnesota trained the teams which are staffing the Family Education Centers and recent reports from the Pews indicate that the project is having an impact in the communities.

Another Adlerian oriented project has been initiated by the West Virginia University Department of Counseling and Guidance. This project consists of two U. S. Department of Justices funded workshops for probation and parole officers. The first workshop centered around the development of group counseling skills. Three theoretical models—relationship, Adlerian, and behavioral—were presented to the participants followed by exposure to actual demonstrations of the approaches. At the conclusion of the workshop, participants led group sessions with inmates from Kennedy Youth Center and the West Virginia School for Boys. The sessions at KYC were video-taped. The video tape equipment was set up so that individuals not conducting groups could observe via monitor. Two of the workshop staff critiqued the groups for the individuals watching the monitors. Following each session the participants leading the groups were given feedback from participants and staff regarding their performance as group leaders. The next day the video tapes were observed by the group leaders and personalized feedback was given regarding how individuals might improve their skills in group leadership.

The use of the video tape enabled the participants to observe approximately six hours of group sessions. Additionally, it allowed the workshop staff to give a maximum amount of feedback based on a small sampling of leadership behavior. Finally, it provided the participants with the opportunity to overcome their fear of making mistakes. Workshop reaction to this experience with the video tape was extremely favorable.

In the final evaluation of the total workshop, the Adlerian model was presented by Dr. Manford Sonstegard and received many favorable comments. A number of the participants requested information regarding additional training in Adlerian techniques. Also the relationship model which was presented by Dr. Wayne Antenen of the University of Georgia received a number of favorable comments. The behavior modification approach was seen as being less valuable by the majority of workshop participants.

A second workshop sponsored by West Virginia University was concerned with training participants in the various methods for developing community resources. The keynote speaker for this workshop was Mr. Robert Powers, Dean of Students of the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago. This final session was open

to the public and participants attended from a four-state region. Additionally, approximately one-third of the time was devoted to exploring methods for setting up Family Education Centers and several of the participants planned to explore ways of establishing Family Education Center in their areas.

At present, the staff of the Counseling and Guidance Department of West Virginia University is exploring other ways in which community involvement in the problems of crime and delinquency can be encouraged. In particular, there is an interest in developing school-based programs which can be used to redirect youth who are involved in delinquent or pre-delinquent type behavior.

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