

Psychotherapy Guidebook

CORRECTIONAL COUNSELING

Robert A. Shearer

Correctional Counseling

Robert A. Shearer

e-Book 2016 International Psychotherapy Institute

From *The Psychotherapy Guidebook* edited by Richie Herink and Paul R. Herink

All Rights Reserved

Created in the United States of America

Copyright © 2012 by Richie Herink and Paul Richard Herink

Table of Contents

[DEFINITION](#)

[HISTORY](#)

[TECHNIQUE](#)

[APPLICATIONS](#)

Correctional Counseling

Robert A. Shearer

DEFINITION

Correctional Counseling is the application of counseling techniques to the development, treatment, and rehabilitation of public offenders. Correctional Counseling is a major part of the services delivered to public offenders in the broader area of correctional treatment and the term best describes the setting of counseling rather than describing a particular counseling technique or theory.

HISTORY

The employment of counselors in correctional facilities began just after World War II, but until 1965 most counselors in corrections were isolated, untrained, and unrecognized. In 1965, the Office of Law Enforcement Assistance was created and was later expanded in 1968. Corrections became of more interest, therefore large amounts of money were made available for rehabilitating the public offender. Many counseling and treatment programs were initiated with the goal of changing the public offender. Many correctional treatment programs were effective, but others were ill-conceived

and not implemented according to sound counseling theories and techniques. Recent efforts have been concentrated in the area of evaluating which of these programs are effective and which are not.

TECHNIQUE

A variety of theoretical counseling models have been applied to counseling public offenders. Most of these have been applied in two different areas of counseling:

1. Corrective counseling and therapy.

The thrust of this counseling is a change in behavior or in the causes that led to the offender's involvement in crime; this counseling is done because the individual has committed a criminal act. The goal of this counseling is to help the offender integrate himself back into society by treating the specific area of the individual's personality or behavior that caused him to come in contact with the criminal justice system.

2. Developmental counseling and therapy.

The thrust of this counseling is to facilitate growth and positive functioning on the part of the offender; this treatment concentrates on the offender as a person, apart from his crime. The goal of this counseling is to help the offender understand the negative aspects of imprisonment

or institutionalization. Consequently, the goals of this counseling are growth and development in general as opposed to being crime-specific.

Correctional Counseling is encompassed in the broader “correctional treatment point of view,” which serves as a philosophical base for the implementation of more specific theoretical approaches:

Assumption I. Most public offenders need help in constructive behavior changes.

Assumption II. Most public offenders can benefit from correctional treatment services offering information on constructive behavior changes.

Assumption III. Many public offenders would prefer to follow a more positive, socially constructive life-style.

Assumption IV. Correctional treatment should not make offenders more dependent on institutions or community services.

Assumption V. Correctional treatment of offenders should meet both the individual needs and social needs for help.

Assumption VI. The only real and effective correctional treatment is voluntary and uncoerced.

Assumption VII. Participation in correctional treatment services in no way substitutes for, or detracts from, legal disposition for crimes committed by offenders.

Assumption VIII. Participation in correctional treatment in no way detracts from or minimizes the seriousness of the crime committed by offenders.

Assumption IX. Participation in correctional treatment services in no way minimizes the necessity of protecting society from public offenders while the offender is involved in treatment.

Assumption X. Correctional treatment is designed to return to society a more socially useful citizen and worker who does not recidivate in crime.

In addition to training in traditional counseling techniques, effective correctional counselors have additional training in the following areas:

- a) An understanding of the criminal justice system.
- b) A knowledge of deviancy theory.
- c) Skills in counseling the highly manipulative, “con artist” personality.
- d) Skills in functioning in a highly untherapeutic environment.

The techniques employed in counseling in correction vary according to the theoretical models that have been applied, and no one theory of counseling prevails in corrections.

APPLICATIONS

Correctional Counseling is applied to a specific group of clients defined by law as offenders. The function of Correctional Counseling may be carried out by workers with a variety of titles, such as caseworker, social worker, offender counselor, correctional treatment specialist, or counselor. In any case, it will be the person charged with helping the offender at various points in the criminal justice system. Counseling occurs with individuals who are in juvenile or adult institutions, who are on probation or parole. Counseling occurs at pre-release centers, work-release centers, halfway houses, or community corrections programs. Correctional Counseling may occur within the court system or law enforcement agencies. The present criminal and juvenile justice systems are a myriad of agencies and programs, so the applications of Correctional Counseling are quite diverse.