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Our System of Corrections: Do Jails Play a Role in Improving Offender Outcomes?

Gary Christensen, Ph.D.
Dutchess County Jail

Elyse Clawson
Crime and Justice Institute

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*Our System of Corrections:
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This paper was developed as part of a set of papers focused on the role of system stakeholders in reducing recidivism through the use of evidence-based practices.



Dot Faust, Correctional Program Specialist
National Institute of Corrections
Community Corrections Division
dfaust@bop.gov
(202) 514-3001
www.nicic.org



Elyse Clawson, Executive Director
Crime and Justice Institute
eclawson@crjustice.org
(617) 482-2520
www.cj institute.org

Author's Bio

Dr. Gary E. Christensen has been employed within the field of corrections for over 28 years. He is Corrections Administrator at the Dutchess County Jail and is Chairman of the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council. Dr. Christensen has authored numerous articles, conducted many seminars and training sessions, and consulted with many agencies and/or governments, nationally and internationally, regarding emerging correctional best practices.

Contact:

Gary E. Christensen, Ph. D.
226 Market Lane
Clinton Corners, NY 12514
(845) 266-5002
(845) 486-3906
gecrtc@aol.com

Jails as a Stakeholder Improving Offender Outcomes

This paper was developed as one in a series and is funded through a cooperative agreement between The Crime and Justice Institute and the National Institute of Corrections, Community Corrections Division. The series is focused on engaging criminal justice system stakeholders in efforts to reduce recidivism and improve offender outcomes through the use of evidence-based practice. This paper explores the role of jails in this context, paying specific attention to sentenced offenders, including those sentenced to incarceration in a jail facility and those sentenced to probation and held in jail due to a violation or new charge. The role of pre-trial agencies and services is addressed in a companion paper.

Practice Within Corrections: Does it Work as a System?

Today, focus has increased on our system of corrections due largely to the high cost of managing a bulging offender population. The high cost of incarceration often prompts discussion regarding the merits of “bricks and mortar” *versus* alternatives to incarceration (ATI). This dynamic often pits community corrections officers against institutional correctional officers and finds one group aligning with “get tough on crime” forces and the other with forces favoring offender rehabilitation. Sadly this dialogue is driven largely by individual philosophy and/or fiscal concerns rather than what works best to change offender behavior; for if it were founded in research or a systems philosophy, it would be clear that such dialogue is damaging and divisive to our system of corrections. It seems clear that any approach that pits one part of a system against another can only expect failure. Indeed, this seems the norm within our system of corrections where our rates of failure far exceed what might be considered acceptable in most any other venue.

Before beginning a dialogue relative to a jail's place within a system of criminal justice in which offenders are "corrected," one must reconcile his/her orientation to offenders and exactly what should be accomplished while they are under criminal sanction. Despite the growing body of knowledge relative to this topic, professionals within criminal justice systems seldom find agreement on correctional strategy and therefore often oppose one another in deed as well as perspective. As such our "system" of criminal justice tends to be a system in name rather than practice.

Available literature related to evidence-based practice within corrections is replete with information regarding the incarceration and supervision of offenders and the most effective methods of reducing criminal recidivism. However, we within the system remain embroiled in debate over issues relative to criminal sanctions and the merit of punishment vs. rehabilitation. We argue whether today's bulging population of sanctioned offenders is a result of a society in which people are simply more dangerous, or of policy and practice decisions that have changed the way we view and thus treat crime. We argue often about whether convicted offenders deserve rehabilitative treatment. In fact, many of us still hold the view that "nothing works" to change offender behavior; while others believe the growing body of literature known as "what works."

Corrections Within the United States: Current Realities

Many excuse or justify statistics that find us leading the world in incarceration per capita with a population at or approaching 2.2 million (Beck & Harrison, 2005) and a community supervised offender population of nearly 5 million (Glaze & Palla, 2005). We struggle with statistics that reflect nearly a 380% increase since 1980 in our criminally sanctioned population despite only a 23% increase in our nation's population (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2004; Glaze

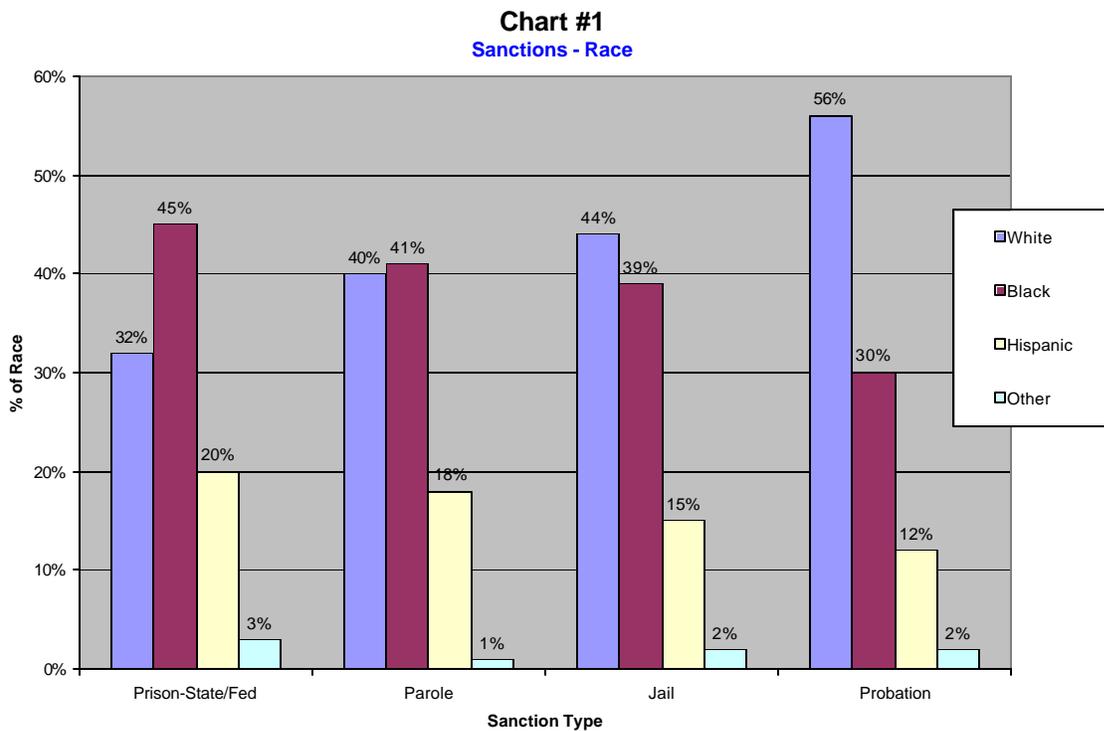
& Palla, 2005, U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Our incarceration rate of 726 persons per each 100,000 citizens in our jails and prisons (Beck & Harrison, 2005) leads all nations including China, Russia, and Cuba (The Sentencing Project, 2005). In fact, our nearest leading competitor in this category is Russia at 564 per 100,000 persons incarcerated (The Sentencing Project, 2005). While these statistics are informative and perhaps striking, they still do not tell the entire story; for analyses of race and associated disparities in this country's system of corrections reveals truths that are far more difficult to accept.

The fact that minority offenders are incarcerated disproportionately fuels much debate over the fairness of our system of criminal justice. National incarceration rates find White offenders incarcerated at a rate of 366 per 100,000; while African American offenders find themselves incarcerated at a rate of 2209 per 100,000 (The Sentencing Project, 2004). Racial disparity is far more disparaging when delineated by age. Nationally, the most incarcerated group of people is males from the age of 25 through the age of 29 – they are incarcerated at a rate of 3390 per 100,000. Within that group of men, Whites are incarcerated at a rate of 1,666 per 100,000 persons, Hispanics at a rate of 3,606, and Blacks at a rate of 12,603 (Beck & Harrison, 2005).

Jail officials are now responsible for the custody of 784,538 offenders in all; 60% of whom are awaiting court action for their current charge. Over the past 10 years, jail incarceration rates (excluding State and Federal Prisons) have risen from 193 persons per 100,000 to 243 per 100,000 resulting in an increase of almost 207,000 jail inmates. Whites represent 44% of the jail population and are incarcerated at a rate of 160 per 100,000; Blacks represent 39% of the jail population and are incarcerated at a rate of 765 per 100,000; and Hispanics account for 15% of the jail population and are incarcerated at a rate of 262 per

100,000. Males are responsible for over 87% of our jail population; however, females continue to outpace their male counterparts in terms of percentage of growth (Beck & Harrison, 2005).

Offender populations responsible to probation and parole are quite different; however, disparities exist within these arenas as well. America's current probation and parole population stands at nearly 5 million offenders after an increase of over 1.1 million over the past ten years (Glaze & Palla, 2005). In terms of percentage of growth and actual number of offenders, probation has outpaced prison, jail, and parole combined. Parole most often follows prison, therefore its percentages of offenders by race are somewhat similar to those of prisons. However, probation, which usually either follows jail or is imposed in lieu of incarceration, supervises a far higher percentage of Whites (Chart #1). The fact that these percentages represent our entire correctional population (n=7 million) makes any type of statistical sampling error impossible. This unfortunate reality contributes to beliefs that racism plays a large role within our system of criminal justice and begs the question, "Why is our system of criminal justice far more likely to incarcerate Black offenders?"



Our system of corrections is affected deeply by our debate of these issues, whether related to race and sanction or perspective on what offenders need or deserve. Many refuse to believe or even consider the increasing body of literature that describes best practice within our business known as “what works.” Battles are waged often between the soft on crime “do-gooders” and the “get tough on crime” crowd as well as others who tout the inequities of the system. To complicate matters relative to offender change, many within the treatment community argue the merits of confrontational modalities over directive approaches designed to enhance intrinsic motivation. Indeed, these conflicts and others like them make for a correctional system in varying states of disagreement.

Regardless of orientation, most agree that ours is a system in turmoil. We incarcerate and/or sanction at the highest rate ever; yet we are unable to come to a common understanding of why. In spite of this reality, we find ourselves continuing with practices that have been used for

years despite our seeming inability to “correct” offenders consistently. We cling to terms or premises such as rehabilitation; yet we do not consider their true meaning. After all, why would we want to rehabilitate an offender? Why would we want to return him/her to a former environmental, emotional, or cognitive condition? Aren’t these the very factors that we have found correlate quite highly with an offender’s reason for being in our charge?

If we were to learn from our past, it seems that we would embrace a practice of offender *habilitation* designed to teach new cognitive skills – methods that provide alternative courses to steer offenders away from poor decisions that have resulted in their repeat offending. We would advance daily routines that require offenders to practice and learn how to utilize these new social skills. We would seize opportunities to model these skills for offenders. As public servants, we would employ these methods in the interest of long-term public safety, despite personal views or values that may be contrary to the research. Despite our differences, hope remains that in the interest of long-term public safety, professionals within our system of corrections can find commonality of mission, vision, and practice. In fact, at some juncture in the not-so-distant future, it would seem that the public will demand it.

Evidence-Based Practice – The Effectiveness of Criminal Sanctions

Despite the many arguments in which we in corrections engage, it is clear that there exists correctional strategies that do reduce offender recidivism at a statistically significant rate. In fact a recent meta-analysis conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (2006), revealed that offender recidivism can be reduced by an array of correctional strategies as part of a continuum of community-based services and sanctions. Regardless of orientation, whether boot camps, jail, treatment programs, or community supervision (with or without electronic monitoring), the evidence is conclusive: assessment, intervention, and support are

necessary components of any correctional strategy that expects or is designed to reduce recidivism.

Effective treatment, for example, must be cognitive behavioral in nature and be employed by professionals who understand and practice within a social learning environment (Gornick, 2002). Treatment must also be based upon individual needs rather than a “one-size-fits all” approach (Inciardi & Saum, 1997; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1999). Effective correctional treatment is also multidisciplinary - it requires the aligned expertise of all involved with an offender. Without doubt, an offender will find inconsistencies in approach and alignment and use them to “split” the people to whom he/she reports. A corrections officer (community or institutional) who acts in a manner contrary to effective treatment will counter the effects of otherwise sound correctional treatment. A mental health professional who does not believe in the efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy and practices otherwise, will thwart the efforts of an evidence-based correctional strategy.

Tools such as motivational interviewing (Miller and Rollnick, 1991) have shown great promise in eliciting a desire to change among offenders (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1999). In fact, this approach seems to facilitate a process of change for an offender while offering officers the opportunity to communicate with offenders in a non-confrontational manner. Officers who utilize this method get more information about offenders and they are better able to figure out what makes them “tick.” They are better able to ensure that offenders follow terms and conditions or rules and regulations and in assisting offenders to plan for transition to their local communities – to *our* local communities.

Within any correctional strategy it is the professional’s ability (whether officer, therapist, lawyer, or judge) to communicate effectively with a probationer, client, or inmate that

determines the effectiveness of the outcomes obtained. We within the field have known for years that appropriate communication with offenders is ethical and thus we strive to ensure that officers within our respective organizations have the tools to communicate. However, it is only within the past few years that we have realized that the officers most effective at influencing a decrease in recidivism are those who communicate effectively and build positive, professional relationships. In fact, the success in jail or community programming hinges on the officers' ability to reach offenders using communication strategies (Gornick, 2002). Without this skill, a program founded on the best of principles is doomed.

Communicating effectively as corrections professionals is not as simple as being nice to offenders. In fact, it is quite a lot more. Many who are simply nice do no more to enhance long-term public safety than those who are "not nice." Effective communication within corrections is accomplished respectfully and with a purpose – to classify offenders objectively and assist them to develop strategies to manage their own risk. We must employ offenders' expertise about themselves; while assisting them to learn new skills that offer alternatives to their past. We must go out and determine what types of interventions are available within our local system and then partner with offenders to determine which are best suited to meet their needs and change their behavior. We must assist offenders by offering them numerous opportunities to practice and become proficient with their new skills. Through such an approach offenders are most likely to "buy-in" or accept a plan of personal change – a strategy designed and implemented in the best interests of all concerned.

All too often bosses become frustrated and chide subordinates because they have not communicated effectively with the probationers, inmates, or clients in their charge. Most times, bosses do not understand the irony of their action. After all, how could we expect to influence

others to act positively when we demonstrate exactly the opposite? At every level of the system, whether officer to offender, officer to supervisor, or supervisor to CEO, positive modeling is imperative. Quite daunting is the reality that one's personal model can never be turned off. We must, at all times, take full responsibility for the effect that we have on others. We must ask ourselves the question, "how does what I'm doing right now help to make things better and more effective?" If we model negative or unproductive behavior then we should expect the same from others. If we model positive or productive actions then we can expect others to follow. In an arena where change is prevalent, we must never lose sight of the fact that negative behaviors wipe out easily the positive efforts of our colleagues – those that have a higher probability of reducing offender recidivism – those that are proven to increase long-term public safety. If we model negative, unproductive behavior consistently, we must accept the fact that our behavior actually detracts from the probability of a safer community.

Offender Classification - to Jail or Not to Jail?

Offender classification is all important in determining the level of risk an offender poses to the public. Perhaps more importantly, current research proves that offenders have the best chance of success if they are grouped by level of criminogenic risk (Bonta, Bogue, Crowley, & Motiuk, 2001, Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002). Most correctional systems do employ classification instruments to classify offenders within institutions and supervision arrangements; however, many of these instruments measure only static risk factors such as criminal history or type of crime. Such instruments do offer information for classification officers and case managers; however, they do not measure dynamic criminogenic risks (risks that can be changed to lessen the likelihood of offender recidivism). Third generation actuarial risk assessments are available to measure dynamic risk factors and are central to evidence based practice within

corrections. When validated and normed for a specific population, assessments such as the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) or the NorthPointe Compass have proven quite useful. Unfortunately, despite the fact that such an instrument is essential for offender classification, case-planning, and the development of needs-driven treatment/transition plans, many do not use and/or apply these assessments.

A validated actuarial risk assessment instrument has many benefits and should be utilized to assist in determining what type of offender should be incarcerated or supervised within the community in response to violations of supervision conditions. Jails today must consider the use of such instruments; for they are posed with supervising varying groups of offenders - those awaiting court disposition while already on supervision, those found guilty and sentenced, and those who are incarcerated for violations of probation. Each group presents different challenges when considering transition from jail to the community; therefore assessment of dynamic criminogenic risk is essential to a successful transition plan.

For too long we within the correctional profession have relied upon static factors and/or our professional “gut instinct” to classify offenders. By their nature, static factors remain the same and therefore always predict the same - so how could they help us to determine treatment targets? Using only static risk factors, even a reformed, productive former offender would be assessed with the same or a higher level of risk than he/she might have in the active stages of his/her criminal career. Could our continued reliance on static risk instruments be responsible, at least in part, for recidivism rates in excess of 50%? Could these instruments, augmented only by professional judgment, actually contribute to the inequities within our system? While investigation of these issues is beyond the scope of this document, it is clear that third generation risk assessments accomplish the goal of objectivity and offer changeable offender risk factors

that should be used as treatment targets to change criminal thinking and behavior. In fact, using these treatment targets, several jails across the country have demonstrated that evidence based policy and practice has contributed to improved rates of successful offender transition (Christensen, 2002). Jails in Dutchess County, New York, Hamden County, Massachusetts, and Montgomery County, Maryland are three such examples.

The Work of Jails: High-Risk Offenders and Their Effect on Public Safety

The determination to place a sentenced offender in jail is one on which much attention has been given. Judges, politicians, correctional officials, treatment providers, and community activists alike align with various forces for various reasons and debate the merits of jail. However, a validated actuarial assessment can offer objective evidence to assist in this decision. In most cases, correctional facilities should be reserved for higher risk offenders who have been sentenced or are being held for violations of supervision conditions, while their lower risk counterparts should be supervised within the community. Such a process of classification is far more objective than antiquated methods of static classification and it offers a means to measure offender progress and outcomes that in turn contribute to informed sanctioning decisions. Simply stated, to achieve the best possible outcomes offenders must be grouped by level of dynamic criminogenic risk (Bonta, Bogue, Crowley, & Motiuk, 2001; Gendreau, Goggin, & Paparozzi, 1996, Latessa, Cullen, & Gendreau, 2002).

Regardless of the final sanction that lay in wait for offenders, many begin their interface with the correctional system via jail. Despite common thinking, operation of these facilities is quite different from prisons, for jails experience admissions and release rates that far exceed those of prisons. In fact, it takes approximately 2 years for our nation's prison population to cycle once; while our jail population cycles 20 - 25 times during the same time period (O'Toole,

2002). Jails also have populations that are largely pretrial, most often exceeding 60% of their total census (Beck, 1998; Beck & Harrison, 2005). Contrary to common understanding, they release 90% of their populations directly back to the local community and their admission rates are usually over ten times that of their daily population. Given the reality of shorter, uncertain incarceration periods, the opportunity for immersion within comprehensive programmatic initiatives within jails is relatively short. This has led to the assumption that comprehensive correctional programming is not suited for local correctional populations. According to the United States Department of Justice, only 43% of jails provided any form of substance/alcohol abuse treatment (68% of those referred only to self help groups such as AA, NA, or peer counseling). More striking is the fact that only 12% of our nation's jails provided an array of strategies that could form the basis for a comprehensive correctional strategy (Wilson, 2000).

While this reality is unfortunate, in the context of current best practice, contemporary correctional leaders must ask themselves many questions.

- Is it possible to offer comprehensive, transitional programming within a local correctional facility?
- What groups of offenders should be targeted?
- Should jail officials partner with other correctional agencies, community partners, or treatment professionals?
- Are criminal justice professionals willing to work systematically with jail officials to enhance evidence-based practicepractice efforts beginning in the jail?
- Will such an application prove fruitful regarding future recidivism rates?
- How can such a venture be funded?
- Should jail administrators be held accountable for offender outcomes outside of the jail?
- What part must correctional officers play in such a strategy?
- What additional training will be necessary?

- Will jail transition efforts conflict with principles of direct supervision?

These are but a sampling of the many questions that must be considered when making local policy decisions relative to comprehensive programming within local correctional facilities. Topics such as these must be vetted fully so that system professionals understand the expectations that are part of such an endeavor.

Organizational/System Change – The Role of Correctional Leadership

It is possible, for relatively little in terms of expenditure, to administer a successful transitional program within a local correctional facility that has a positive effect on recidivism (Christensen, 2002). However, jail administrators must lead such initiatives, for organizational change and redevelopment will be necessary. Their organizations will need to function as proactive learning organizations where outcomes are evaluated and system processes are changed to improve outcomes. System stakeholders must be identified and engaged to discern the many mutual benefits that can arise from such a venture. Local populations need to be understood in the context of criminogenic risk as well as the capacity of the current local system of criminal justice and the community to engage in comprehensive, collaborative correctional strategies.

These very important analyses and actions can be simplified through the efforts of a local criminal justice or coordinating council. Jail administrators interested in successful jail transition efforts must be involved with stakeholders who reside “outside the walls.” This has not been the traditional role of a jail administrator – to be proactive and engage outside organizations, entities, or groups that have interest in the people housed in jail. They tend to react to crises and manage their organizations as closed entities to protect themselves, their staff, and their operation. However, to lead a viable jail transition effort, jail administrators must shed these values and practices in favor of a far more collaborative, proactive, and inclusive approach to corrections. They must engage in collaborative groups that are inclusive of as many stakeholders as possible.

As if the premise of opening the doors to entities formerly feared or in philosophic opposition to conventional jails is not daunting enough; jail administrators interested in comprehensive jail transition efforts must also prepare to change the culture of their organizations. Conventional jails most often hire correctional officers based solely upon their ability to contribute to safe, secure environments through enforcement mechanisms. They tend to be opposed to rehabilitative treatment programs, doubt the results, and feel that inmates are “getting over” on the system. Accordingly, they may sabotage rehabilitative efforts and find themselves in conflict with external stakeholder groups.

Evidence-based practice (EBP) within a local correctional facility requires far more of correctional officers than a simple “warehousing” mentality. In fact, the realization of a comprehensive correctional strategy hinges on a leader’s ability to engage officers in a transformational organizational change strategy to employ their expertise to understand and affect behavioral change in the offenders who they know so well (Christensen, 2002, 2004; Gornick, 2002). Correctional officers are all important in the application and delivery of services – they must be aligned with and an integral component of any correctional strategy. It is therefore the responsibility of correctional leaders to educate their staff and sell the concept of evidence-based correctional practice. Leaders should target other leaders or potential champions from all levels within their respective organizations and employ their help in associated organizational change efforts. Staff members will look to the leader’s personal model as they decide whether or not to follow him/her, so the proactive efforts that he/she has taken thus far will be useful to establish the overall credibility of the effort.

High Risk Offenders in Jail Transition Programs

In an EBP correctional system only high risk offenders should populate jails. Of course, individual jurisdictions must make determinations regarding their classification of high risk and how it influences local sanctioning philosophy. Regardless, the concentration of high risk offenders makes jail a difficult place to work; yet it also offers

contemporary jails a viable opportunity to change offender behavior. With the exception of *extreme* high-risk offenders, recent research has shown us that the higher the criminogenic risk, the more likely that correctional treatment can impact thinking and behavioral changes that yield improved outcomes (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005).

Therefore, given the context of higher risk populations, jails are uniquely situated to significantly enhance long-term public safety. To accomplish this, correctional officers must understand their role beyond the jail and be engaged in transition program efforts.

Professional clinicians should be employed for the purpose of individual counseling and the facilitation of treatment groups; however, existing correctional staff can prove invaluable in the delivery, application, and follow-up of initiatives designed to facilitate successful offender transition or return to any locality. In fact, a correctional officer who demonstrates the inclination and ability to address offender responsibility through non-judgmental communication may well be the impetus for an offender to contemplate behavioral change. Through their efforts, based upon their positive professional relationships with offenders, correctional officers offer a positive “lens” through which offenders can look open-mindedly at other system professionals.

Contemporary jails offer external stakeholders opportunities to meet offenders before they transition to the local community. This practice should be accommodated by jail officials and exercised as often as possible; for offenders tend to be far more likely to keep their post-release appointments if they know the person to whom they are to report. Potentially challenging responsibility issues can be addressed before they arise as a barrier to professional relationships outside the jail facility. Early reports and positive relationships with community partners or community corrections officials often seem to prompt future successful transition. Community partners who become acquainted with offenders trying to change are far more likely to offer access to a stable community living environment and/or employment. Community treatment, consistent reporting, stable housing, and employment all represent factors integral to successful offender transition;

therefore the effects of positive professional relationships created to accommodate these needs prior to release are far reaching.

The practice of community corrections, treatment professionals, family, or community members “reaching in” to a correctional facility can only help to manage a diverse inmate population, both in and outside the jail. Many offenders within jail facilities have no mandated post release supervision; yet we know they return to their communities with many of the risks that they brought to the jail in the first place. Successful transition from a jail facility is difficult at best if an offender is returned to a procriminal environment with little opportunity to practice his/her newly acquired behavioral skills safely. Therefore, jail officials must take the lead to link offenders with services and prosocial forces within the community. For example, significant relationships (family or otherwise) might be examined as they may or may not contribute to an offender’s successful transition from jail, or relapse prevention strategies might be planned, or housing needs considered and addressed. These are but a few of many considerations for correctional officers tasked with transition responsibilities. Professionals and/or prosocial family members should conference regularly with institutional correctional staff to address identified person-specific offender needs before reentry. Such a process assists offenders in realizing the best possible environmental “fit” outside the jail facility and positive relationships that develop increase the likelihood that an offender will become a productive member of his/her community.

For offenders who are sentenced to post-release supervision, relatively short, habilitative stays in jail facilities can be augmented by utilizing and expanding upon the work of institutional correction officers. Community corrections officials can gain an early advantage by interfacing regularly with jail transition staff and utilizing risk analyses and information obtained during incarceration. Institutional transition staff must help to “blur the line” between institutional and community corrections and prompt dialogue and interaction with their important community counterparts before inmates become

probationers. Inmates should get to know their probation officers within jail before they reenter the community to build a level of trust and assist in their own habilitation. To promote such a practice, leadership of these organizations must ensure that their policies and their staff compliment one another. The more institutional and community corrections officers work together as a cohesive team, the more likely offenders will transition successfully. Such a team approach demonstrates for offenders consistency in purpose and general professional competence – it *does not* offer offenders the opportunity to resist change due to lack of system uniformity.

Overarching correctional strategies must ensure consistency of approach in offender programming. Whether, inside the walls of a jail or within a community corrections center and regardless of the type of staff doing the work; a consistent foundation of cognitive behavioral, skills-based treatment must take place within a social learning environment where staff “walk their talk.” Within such a framework, staff efforts must be consistent with those of staff in different venues. Such a constant allows community corrections the benefit of building upon change work begun within a jail setting and it lessens the likelihood that offenders will be left to discern between conflicting messages. Conflicting messages between treatment venues will most certainly negate good work done previously and entrench already present treatment barriers such as mistrust and the general belief among offenders that the system is out to get them.

Conclusion/Summary

It remains a mystery why corrections professionals and those associated with criminal justice continue to negate the growing body of research that offers useful information regarding offender behavioral change. Many suppositions exist regarding motivations of groups, organizations, and/or individuals to remain status quo. Excuses are offered why “what works” will not work and skepticisms remain. However, the time has come where these arguments and differences will become moot; for by necessity, our public will demand that offender

classification, sanction, placement, and treatment will be done as it is most effective. This will happen despite the differences that exist and outcomes will need to demonstrate successful strategies. No longer will anecdotal validation suffice simply because a professional says his/her approach works best. Actual outcomes will determine the manner and method by which correctional practice is carried forth. Indeed, the growth in incarceration and the realization of its expense has created urgency for this orientation.

This orientation will present personal peril to those within correctional leadership who refuse to change. No longer will a leader be complimented when it is said that he/she has remained the same over the past 20 years. In the years to come, such a statement might well be impetus for termination or change of employment, for a correctional leader who refuses to change and/or learn affects too many in a less than positive manner. Such dogged determination to remain consistent in yesterday's approaches to offender custody will simply not be tolerated. Yes, we are entering a time in which correctional administrators will no longer be able to use the same old tired arguments, for they will have no means to prove their case and they will be exposed easily as they are required to venture outside the jail confines. They will have to undergo personal change or "pass the reins" to their more open-minded counterparts.

Within a system of criminal justice where offenders are classified using the latest actuarial risk assessments, jails offer a unique opportunity to begin the behavioral change so needed by the incarcerated population. Traditionally, jail facilities have done an excellent job of incapacitating offenders and have thus done wonderful work in promoting public safety over relatively short periods of incarceration. However, the time has come when jails will be required to do more to help local communities with long-term public safety. This is an ever-

growing reality due to information that shows the positive effect a jail facility can have on long-term public safety.

What does all this mean to a corrections officer on a block in our jails or a probation or community corrections officer on a block within our community? How can one professional change a system, or for that matter, an offender? The answer lies in the professional's ability to relate to others. Such an approach does not require or encourage corrections professionals to be "soft on crime;" rather they must operate based upon the solid evidence that proves that the manner in which they deal with probationers or inmates is most important in opening a path for an offender to *consider* change. Professionals and leaders within our field must accept evidence or outcome-based practice and work in the best interests of their community – in the best interests of long-term public safety.

Regarding our system of corrections and all who comprise it, communication is the key to moving all of our never ending arguments toward intelligent dialogue – dialogue that examines a system of research-based correctional treatment – dialogue that enhances both cost effectiveness and efficiency of outcomes. This is not to imply that "cost effectiveness and efficiency" equals the alleviation or elimination of any one type of sanction, for sanctioning philosophies vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. We must be clear that despite our best efforts, there will always be an incarcerated population and offenders on community supervision - there will always be offenders who recidivate. However, productive communication among system players will allow us to overcome past battles regarding territoriality and to realize local discussions designed to understand fully what can and should be expected as a result of the application of a given criminal sanction. It will allow us to talk about what works best in the

context of our local systems. Perhaps most importantly, it will allow us to operate consistently as one system of offender management – a system best positioned to prompt offender change. Hoffer stated, “In times of change, the learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists.” May we all become correctional learners who act in the best interests of the public and accept the challenges that we face; rather as learned corrections professionals who advocate for the status quo and operate today according to yesterday’s rules.

Appendix A

One Example of a Successful Jail Transition Program

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program: In Poughkeepsie, New York the Dutchess County Jail (DCJ) houses between 320 – 400 offenders on any given day, well beyond its rated capacity of 286. Yearly admission rates approach 3500, the average length of stay is over 30 days, and over 90% of those admitted transition directly from the DCJ to the local community. These realities, coupled with local recidivism rates ranging from 48% to 62% (dependent on the group being measured), led to the initiation of a jail transition program strategy. This approach, based in “what works” theory, is designed to clarify offender needs, challenge old systems of belief, and link with external stakeholders to facilitate successful offender transition from the jail.

The DCJ Transition Program (DCJTP) is offered within a 50-bed, direct supervision style unit that operates as a closed community with additional rules and requirements beyond those common to the general population. All aspects and exercises that comprise the DCJ Transition Program are designed to facilitate the development of a comprehensive, written plan for transition unique to each offender. Throughout an intensive 5-week period, this individualized plan for transition is formulated through the joint efforts of each offender, specialized correctional program officers, and clinicians. Of course, the longer a person is immersed in such a program the better his/her chances of successful transition to the community; however, given the rapid turn over that is common within local correctional facilities, this accelerated process was developed to formalize a plan for transition as rapidly as possible.

The following DCJTP mission/goal statement was developed to mesh with overarching departmental objectives relative to long-term public safety.

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program is designed to:

1. Enhance public safety through the management of criminogenic risk factors, while considering the necessity for other types of interventions such as substance and/or alcohol treatment.
2. Facilitate the successful transition of offenders to our community.
3. Reduce recidivism.

In addition to meshing program activity with departmental objectives, program goals further focus the delivery of service on successful offender habilitation in the context of the greater public good. The term *habilitation* is used in lieu of the more common *rehabilitation*, for DCJTP efforts are designed to accommodate the learning of new skills and conditions rather than return or restore offenders to a former state. Among staff, it is clear that all such efforts are undertaken to impact long-term public safety – to change offender behavior and translate behavioral change to the community where offenders must rely on their own internal controls.

The DCJTP 5-week plan

The DCJTP utilizes a 5-week period in which to formulate a plan for transition. During this period, program officers and clinical staff build professional relationships with each inmate to engage him/her in a process of self-disclosure and personal skill building, as well as determine jointly what post-release arrangement may work best. This dialogue is prompted through various structured exercises designed to examine and address known criminogenic risk factors. Correctional program officers manage all such efforts and form in-house case plans designed to assist in the development of a detailed plan for transition. Daily program outcomes are measured and reported formally at weekly, multi-disciplinary case meetings. A sample checklist for daily program outcomes is included in Appendix B and a sample plan for transition is included in Appendix C.

The DCJTP Correctional Environment

Professional practice within the DCJTP takes place within a social learning context; therefore, well-trained, prosocial correctional officers who have been trained in and practice the tenets of direct supervision are ideal for this environment. Often recognized within the DCJTP is the fact that people change or influence other people, not programs. As such, it is essential that correctional officers, as well as other associated professionals, model consistently and in a manner that will enhance outcomes through their presence within the social learning environment. A mix of “firm but fair” with a directed, person-centered approach pervades the program environment from early assessment and interview through release and transition.

LSI-R/ASUS protocols (Level of Service Inventory – Revised Edition; Adult Substance Abuse Survey) are conducted with each participant by correctional program officers and/or clinicians to determine criminogenic profiles, assist in classification decisions, and assign group placement. To alleviate fear of the unknown, offenders receive general education relative to criminogenic assessment and associated outcomes. Subsequent dialogue with each offender then explains the actual findings of the assessment/interview process to foster a common understanding of criminogenic risk/need, predictions for recidivism, program requirements, mandatory group assignment, and early transition planning.

A variety of additional training and therapy that explores the application of life skills and associated difficulties is co-facilitated by professional clinicians and correctional officers. All such activities are designed with the expressed intent of contrasting current thought processes of offenders with alternative ways of thinking that could lead to prosocial behavioral outcomes. Central to the early efforts of transition program staff, is

the principle of exploring ambivalence regarding behavioral change and highlighting discrepancies between current and desired behaviors. As offenders become more aware of thinking errors, they are given many opportunities to discuss and practice new skills or methods to approach old problems. It is posited that this process leads to the day-to-day use of these new skills both in and outside of the jail facility.

Follow-up is a unique component of Dutchess County Jail Transition Program. All DCJTP participants agree to be tracked by correctional program officers for one-year post-incarceration. This component of the strategy was developed in response to the reality that 80% of all recidivism takes place within 6 months of release. Using the plan for transition as a basis for discussion, correctional program officers make contact with all program graduates and/or their families at least once-per-month for one-year after their release from jail. These contacts offer correctional staff the opportunity to “check-in” and see if the plan for transition is being carried out or if further assistance is needed. They are further intended to enhance prosocial family and personal networks that are likely to employ informal social controls.

It is the belief of the DCJTP staff that the combination of simple direct supervision management coupled with the application of “What Works” methodologies and community/family networking accounts largely for the successes that have been realized through this strategy. However, without the effort and personal buy-in of the professionals who are associated with the DCJTP, these successes would be mitigated significantly. The degree of belief in both the process and people in general held by this group of professionals, officers and clinicians alike, is central to the viability of the overall effort.

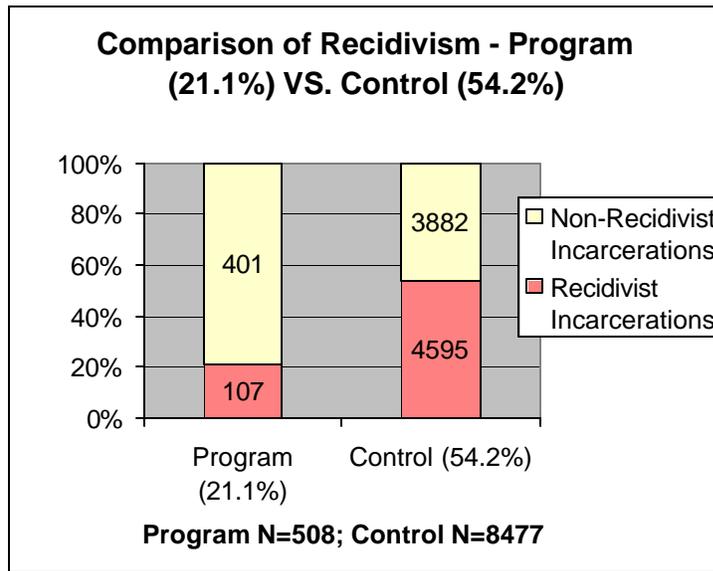
The professional relationships that they develop with offenders are all important to this or any such effort.

The openness with which the DCJTP is operated is also thought to contribute greatly to the effort. DCJTP staff assists other professionals from outside the jail facility to accommodate post-release system needs and communicate the needs of each offender. Their assessments and insights are incorporated with post release supervision efforts, community placements, rehabilitation programs, housing decisions, job readiness, educational placements, etc. As part of this approach, external stakeholders (professional, civilian and family) frequent the jail facility to assist in case planning and, if necessary, get to know offenders before their release. Every effort is made to ensure that transition planning is consistent with strategies outside the jail facility, whether voluntary or resulting from a court sanction.

Outcomes of the Dutchess County Jail Transition Program Strategy

For the 3-year period beginning November of 1998 (initiation of DCJTP) through November of 2001, the DCJTP strategy realized over a 33% reduction in recidivism for the inmates who elected to participate within this effort. To test the significance of these results, the Dutchess County Office of Computer Information Service (OCIS) provided information regarding other Dutchess County inmates from the same time period, who by all accounts looked like DCJTP inmates, yet did not undergo transition initiatives. Chart #1 depicts comparisons of recidivism leading to reincarceration between this group of inmates, which accounted for 8477 incarcerations, and the DCJTP group, which accounted for 508.

Chart #1



The success rate demonstrated by the first study (Christensen, 2002) has continued and, to date, finds recidivism rates for program inmates at approximately 25%. A new study was conducted in 2006 to examine the rates of recidivism for program inmates *prior to their entry* to the DCJTP. Given the results of previous studies and the fact that DCJTP houses high-risk offenders, it was expected that these rates would be consistent with that of the general jail population. Indeed, the combined rate of recidivism for all inmates prior to their entry to the program was calculated at approximately 60%. However, after completing the DCJTP, this same group of offenders recidivated at a rate of only 25%. It is recognized that fuller longitudinal analyses of these data are necessary to draw statistically significant conclusions; however these analyses coupled with prior studies indicate that this approach shows great promise in its ability to affect offender behavior post incarceration.

Appendix B

The DCJTP 5-Week Plan - Checklist

WEEK ONE

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

Progress Evaluation Checklist

Inmate Name _____ Date of Incarceration _____

Date of Program Start _____ Inmate ID # _____

Initiation of Plan for Transition (multidisciplinary collaboration - correctional program staff, educational staff, professional therapeutic staff) **8-4 Correctional Program Staff**

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

“My Transition Needs” Form to Inmate? Yes _____ No _____

Job Application to Inmate? Yes _____ No _____

Personal Contract completed and signed? Yes _____ No _____

Computer Data information entered? Yes _____ No _____

“How Would I Describe Myself” to Inmate Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress – review “My Transition Needs” Form)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Inmate / Peer Welcome and Interview - structured interview process accomplished by designated inmate / peer representatives (mediated by **4-12 Correctional Program Staff**)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Include names of Inmate / Peer Interviewers)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Programmatic Assignment - Educational, Therapeutic, Life Skills, Vocational (**8-4 Correctional Program Staff**)

Assigned to a Group? Yes _____ No _____

Individual Counseling? Yes _____ No _____

Application for work filed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (List Assignments – Individual / Group)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Formal Agreement and Contract (8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

WEEK TWO

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

Progress Evaluation Checklist

Inmate Name _____ Date of Incarceration _____

Date of Program Start _____ Inmate ID # _____

Participation in Group and/or Individual Counseling (Educational, Therapeutic, Community, Vocational) (8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress – List Groups)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Begin Self-Assessment Evaluation Form (Issue How will I change? and Letter to myself) (Assistance - 4-12 Correctional Program Staff - scheduled personal interview)

Handed out? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress and Nature of Interview – Include name(s) of correctional staff as well as key elements of change which were self-reported by the Inmate, if any)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Review and Assess “MyTransition Needs” Form

Discuss Transition Planning Process

(Assistance - Professional - individual counseling) (8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress -Review “My Transition Needs” Form)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

WEEK THREE

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

Progress Evaluation Checklist

Inmate Name _____ Date of Incarceration _____

Date of Program Start _____ Inmate ID # _____

Continued Participation in Group and/or Individual Counseling (Educational, Therapeutic, Community, Vocational) **(8-4 Correctional Program Staff)**

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress - List Groups)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Complete Self-Assessment Evaluation Form (How will I change?)

(Assistance - **4-12 Correctional Program Staff** - scheduled personal interview)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

“Letter to Myself” reviewed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress and Nature of Interview – Include name(s) of correctional staff as well as key elements of change which were self-reported by the Inmate)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Complete Initial Transition Plan (8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress – Key Transition Issues)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

WEEK FOUR

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

Progress Evaluation Checklist

Inmate Name _____ Date of Incarceration _____

Date of Program Start _____ Inmate ID # _____

Continued Participation in Group and/or Individual Counseling (Educational, Therapeutic, Community, Vocational) (8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Review "letter to myself?" Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Presentation in Group - "My Transition Needs" / "How Will I change?"

(8-4 Correctional Program Staff)

Presentation of "My Transition Needs" and "How will I Change?" forms in Group?

Yes _____ No _____ Date _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Testimony in Group)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Formal Review of Program History (Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ No _____

Comments (Brief explanation - Positive and negatives regarding participation and behavior) Note** (4-12 Correctional Program Staff must consider all issues relevant to program participation -i.e. disciplinary history, group attendance, program counseling, etc.)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

WEEK FIVE THROUGH RELEASE (*note week* _____)

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

Progress Evaluation Checklist

Inmate Name _____ Date of Incarceration _____

Date of Program Start _____ Inmate ID # _____

Continued Participation in Group and/or Individual Counseling (Educational, Therapeutic, Community, Vocational) **(8-4 Correctional Program Staff)**

Completed? Yes _____ **No** _____

Comments (Brief explanation of Progress)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

On-going Review of Program History (Correctional Program Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ **No** _____

Comments (Brief explanation - Positive and negatives regarding participation and behavior) *Note** (4-12 Correctional Program Staff must consider all issues relevant to program participation –i.e. disciplinary history, group attendance, program counseling, etc.)*

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Complete Pre-release and Transition Plan Interview

(4-12 Correctional Program Staff and Clinical Staff)

Completed? Yes _____ **No** _____

“Letter to Myself” attached? *Yes* _____ *No* _____

Program Certificate Issued? *Yes* _____ *No* _____

Data Entry for Release Completed? *Yes* _____ *No* _____

Comments (Review progress, Initial Transition Plan, and established linkages to outside providers)

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Release Date: _____

Staff Member (Initials) _____ Date _____

Appendix C

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program

CONFIDENTIAL

Plan for Transition

NAME: _____

CJ#: _____

Address: _____

Sentence/Release OUT Date: _____

HU 23 /Program Entry Date: _____

Prison / Drug Rehab. Circle one if applicable

Telephone Contact # _____

A Strategy for Change

THE MOST IMPORTANT INGREDIENTS that will lead to your success is your ability to think and act different than you have in the past. This strategy represents your accomplishments and your plans for the future that you put together while you participated within the Dutchess County Jail Transition Program. REMEMBER the following things as you move toward your goals:

- 1) Do not look for reasons or justifications to commit any crime.
- 2) Hang around with people who are successful in life (legally).
- 3) Use your energy in a positive way and be clear with yourself about your feelings, intentions, and motivations.
- 4) ALWAYS ask yourself “How does what I am doing right now help me toward my goals in life?”
- 5) Further your education.

Remember these steps and adhere to your plans and

YOU WILL HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE.

Plans for Living Accommodations / Housing Needs

Before you came to the DCJ, where and with whom did you live?

When you transition from the DCJ where and with whom will you live?

Strategy for HOUSING (Will there be a difference between where and with whom you lived before you came to the DCJ and after you leave? Identify associations, etc.)

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program
CONFIDENTIAL
Plan for Transition

Associations/Relationships

When you transition from the DCJ with whom will you live?

Describe relationships: _____

Prosocial? (Circle one) YES NO

Describe why YES or NO _____

When you transition from the DCJ who will be your friends?

Describe closest friends: _____

Prosocial? (Circle one) YES NO

Describe why YES or NO _____

Married? Girl/Boyfriend? (Circle one) YES NO

Describe relationship (length of time together, things you do together, etc.):

Prosocial? (Circle one) YES NO

Describe why YES or NO _____

Difficulties with relationships? (Circle one) YES NO

Describe Difficulties (history of abuse – abuser/abused, violence) _____

Feelings associated with these episodes? _____

Strategy for Change ATTITUDES / RELATIONSHIPS (how I will prevent the same type of actions with my relationships in the future – Identify thinking errors, attitudes, associations, etc

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program
CONFIDENTIAL
Plan for Transition

educational / Vocational Planning

Did you have a GED or High School diploma when you entered the DCJ? YES NO

Have you received your GED while in the DCJ? YES NO

Will you further your education when you leave the DCJ? YES NO

Where? Name School / College / University / Vocational School / Apprenticeship

Horizontal lines for text entry.

Goals? How will my education move me toward a work career? _____

Horizontal line for text entry.

Strategy for EDUCATION (What will I do to further my education when I leave the DCJ? Describe specifics - location, application process, human contacts, field of interest, etc.)

Horizontal lines for text entry.

Work / Employment Planning

Have you completed a job application? YES NO

Have you met with or contacted prospective employers? YES NO

Describe contact

Horizontal lines for text entry.

Have you met with or utilized the resources of Dutchess Works, the Labor Department, the Untapped Labor Force, or any Chamber of Commerce? YES NO

Describe contact

Horizontal lines for text entry.

Strategy for EMPLOYMENT (Where will I work when I leave the DCJ? Describe specifics - location, application process, human contacts, prospective employer(s), field of interest, etc.)

Horizontal lines for text entry.

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program
CONFIDENTIAL
Plan for Transition

linical Treatment / Personality Issues

linical Diagnosis (if applicable)

Medication? YES NO

List Medication(s)

Where will treatment be provided when you transition from the DCJ?

Treatment Provider?

Strategy/Treatment

cohol / Substance Abuse History? YES NO

Describe substance/alcohol use

How Long?

Past Treatment for Drug / Alcohol Abuse (including all rehabs, AA, NA, etc.)

What is Your Longest Period of Sobriety to Date?

When and Why?

Current Relapse Prevention Strategy to be utilized when leaving the DCJ?

situational or Current Life Difficulties Resulting in Personal Distress

pecifics Regarding Current Distress

hat has changed in your Life Recently Related to Personal Distress?

ategy/Treatment (What will you do when you leave the DCJ to change the way this/these situation(s) affect you?)

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program
CONFIDENTIAL
Plan for Transition

Clinical Treatment / Personality Issues

Anger issues?

Is anger a major factor in your current incarceration?

YES

NO

Explain

Difficulty showing/expressing feelings (other than anger)?

YES

NO

Explain

Self-worth issues (feeling bad about your place in life)?

YES

NO

Explain (what would you like to be different?)

Strategy for Change (how will you change the way you express your feelings when you leave the DCJ?)

Overarching Plan for Treatment (inclusive of all factors identified as important throughout Clinical Treatment and Personality Issues Section)

The Dutchess County Jail Transition Program
CONFIDENTIAL
Plan for Transition

The following segment is MANDATORY for sentenced offenders. If possible, it should be completed for all offenders who are ready to exit the DCJ, regardless of court disposition. However, those participants who are pretrial, temporary, or unsentenced MUST NOT be forced to complete this section.

Thinking / Attitude Change (How will I Change?)

Identification of Criminogenic Attitudes (Past problems related to previous offenses)

Do you take responsibility for current crime? (circle one) YES NO

Describe how you felt when you committed the crime for which you are in jail:

Two horizontal lines for writing.

Describe what you were thinking when you committed your current crime BEFORE CRIME

Two horizontal lines for writing.

DURING CRIME

Two horizontal lines for writing.

AFTER CRIME

Two horizontal lines for writing.

Describe CRIME Victims (IF KNOWN: Name, Age, Gender, Race, Relationship, etc.)

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Describe how you feel NOW about the crime you committed.

Three horizontal lines for writing.

Strategy for Change (how I will prevent the same type actions in the future – Identify thinking errors, attitude associations, etc.)

Five horizontal lines for writing.

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