

Roles, Responsibilities, and Competencies

Supervising offenders who are granted
an alternative to incarceration

Learning Objectives

- Trace steps in the evolution of probation/parole internationally over the last 30+ years
- Describe typical job duties of officers who supervise offenders within alternative to incarceration programs
- Based upon current research and studies, what are the characteristics and skills that would make officers effective

Transitions

- In the 1960's, PO's tended to be "brokers of service"
 - They would know what resources were available in the community for offenders and make referrals
 - This phase lasted into the mid 1970's
- In the 1970's you started to see that probation and parole was becoming more law enforcement oriented
 - Driven by the advent of Intensive supervision in the community
 - This phase focused on "zero tolerance" to rule violations – a "get tough" on crime approach

Transitions

- In the mid to late 1980's the field started to see a swing back to alternatives to incarceration
 - Focus was on how to properly select offenders for programs
 - Development of risk assessment documents
- In the 1990's many probation/parole departments began to focus on evidence based practices to supervise offenders in the community
 - This often required that PO's develop skills that would assist in behavior change – an interventionist rather than a monitor
- How is this model changing? Lets take a look

Traditional duties of probation officers

- Writing reports for the court – often called pre-sentence investigation reports (PSI)
 - What are they and how are they used?
 - Document prepared for a judge that would summarize the background of an offender, the offense they were involved in, and their previous criminal history
 - To begin with, the PSI was classified confidential
 - But many departments changed this classification to allow an offender to challenge the accuracy of the report
 - These reports often followed formats that an agency would develop with input from the courts

Traditional duties

- Supervising offenders under community supervision
 - Often started with an agreement signed by the offender, the PO, and sometimes even the judge
 - Because community supervision was a privilege, specific conditions of supervision were set
 - Courts required that these conditions be reasonably be related to the offense and the need for the condition
 - Lets talk about some examples
 - Drug testing
 - Electronic monitoring
 - Treatment
 - Other special conditions

Exploring the Black Box of Supervision, Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 2008, Bonta, Ruggie, Scott, Bourgon, Yessine

- This article was made part of the material available to the class
- Let me summarize for you what the findings were.

Maricopa County Adult Probation

- Hiring, Appraisals & Promotions in an EBP Environment – A Competency Based Approach – Developed for Urban Chiefs Network
- Listed of competencies
 - Building trust
 - Collaboration
 - Communication
 - Conflict Management
 - Continuous Learning and Professional Development
 - Cultural Competence
 - Customer/Client Focus

List of Competencies Continued

- Decision Making/Problem Solving
- Facilitates Change
- Influence
- Planning and Organization
- Stress Tolerance
- Teamwork
- Technical/Professional Knowledge and Skill

Used in the Supervision of PO's

- See Observation Checklist
- Used in promotional opportunities
 - How are people promoted in your organization?
 - See Supervisor Competencies
- Guiding and Developing Staff
 - Who is the most important person in this process, other than the employee?

Probation Officer as a Coach: Building a New Professional Identity

- Article written by Lovins, Cullen, Latessa, and Jonson in June 2018 in Federal Probation, Volume 82, Number 1
- Summary of article
 - A referee wants to judge compliance with conditions of supervision; a coach wants an offender not only to comply with conditions of supervision but for the offender to better themselves (change behavior)
 - Difference is applying rules rather than trying to assist with behavior change

Four Key Talents

- Assess strengths and weakness of offenders
 - Protective factors
 - Criminogenic needs
- The ability to build skills
- Use of reinforcement
- Learn best practices and become behavior-change experts

Benefits of being a Coach

- Clear goal: Improve lives – reduce recidivism
- New kind of correctional accountability
- Value performance of an offender
- Learning that coaching results in better outcomes for the offender

Imaginary probation office

- In the land of Oz, there existed a probation office called Id. Many citizens of Oz wanted to come work in this probation office. Id has 4 probation officers and they just received authorization to hire a 5th PO. Id had two probation officers that had been there for seven years, and were the original hires when the office of Id was opened. The other two have only been there for 2 years. The probation officers of Id had expressed an interest in having some input into the new hire. The overseer of Id thought this was a good idea. Recently, the overseer had been trying to implement evidence based practices.
- The goal is to use the information that has been discussed in this module

Assignment

- The entire class will be participating in developing this hiring process – I will act as your scribe.
- The goal is to develop a process to hire the new probation officer that should include:
 - Qualities that you will be looking for in the new hire
 - How will you determine in an interview whether someone possesses the qualities
 - Once the person is hired, what training should they have?
- We will have 20 minutes to develop our plan.