

Addressing the Unique Reentry Challenges of “End of Sentence” Offenders

Reentry in the State of Connecticut:

Partners in Progress

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The Population...

- Nationally about 19% of offenders are released from prison without community supervision. (Petersillia)
- In Connecticut, 64% of offenders are released because it is the end of their sentence. (Cox, 2006)

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Reconviction...

- For all offenders released from Connecticut prisons the reconviction rate was 39%.
- For offenders released at the end of sentence the reconviction rate was 47%
- The average number of days to rearrest for end of sentence offenders was 238 days.
(Cox, 2006)

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The Population...

- Releases from Administrative Segregation to the community
- Seriously mentally ill offenders
- Short term offenders
- Probation/Parole returns
- Women with gender specific challenges

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Does the Department of Correction have a responsibility to address the community reintegration phase of reentry for offenders no longer under their jurisdiction?■ If we have a shared responsibility for public safety in our state – the answer is “yes.” <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Center for Effective Public Policy © 2009</small></p>

	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Community Resources</h2>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ For all offenders with no formal community supervision – a network of pro-social family and community support is essential to improving success rates. <p style="text-align: center;"><small>Center for Effective Public Policy © 2009</small></p>

Examples...

- Pro-social “family” resources that have a commitment to assisting with the offenders success
- Faith-based groups that have developed expertise in working with offenders
- Community service agencies
- Mental health services for mentally ill offenders
- Mentoring programs
- “In-Reach” programs

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Releases from Administrative Segregation

- Several states have implemented “Step Down” programs to improve the success rates of offenders returning to communities
- Case management become a critical component in achieving positive results with all offenders

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Case Planning

- For some offenders, the initial goals of the case plan may be to “reintegrate” into the general prison population or to get them to a place where they more closely resemble the remainder of the population reentering communities.

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In a Perfect World...

- In a perfect world, all offenders would work their way down the custody matrix to the lowest level of custody prior to their release
- Unfortunately, we don't live in a perfect world

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“Step Down” Programs

- Three phases:
 - Institutional Phase
 - Structured Reentry Phase
 - Community Reintegration Phase

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Ad. Seg. Offenders

- “Step Down” process for Ad. Seg.
 - 4 levels each with varying levels of privileges and incentives. (Missouri)
 - Ability to earn their way out of Ad. Seg to general population
 - Case plan would include strategies to accomplish this (i.e. less conduct violations, employment, programming)

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Releases from Administrative Segregation

- For some chronic, violent, and dangerous offenders who do not respond to reentry efforts, notification of law enforcement and other agencies may be especially warranted.

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Seriously Mentally Ill Offenders

- Developing specialized forensic reentry teams can assist in the continuity of care
- Seamless mental health services from the institution to the community is especially important
- Sufficient medication must be provided upon release to carry them over until the scheduled mental health provider appointment
- Community support to oversee compliance with medication and appointments is necessary

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Short-Term Offenders

- Some offenders may not be incarcerated long enough to receive substantial reentry programming
- For this group, information and community referral can be very important

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Probation/Parole Returns

- These offenders may fit into many of the previously described groups
- The activities leading to their revocation may provide some insight into the reentry challenges they face upon return to the community

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Female Offenders

- While this group may not make up a high percentage of “high risk” releases, they do have significant areas of need that may pose reentry challenges
 - Primary caregiver of children
 - Dysfunctional relationships/home plan
 - Mental Health issues
 - Trauma and abuse issues

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In Michigan...

- Legislation introduced to end “end of sentence” releases. All offenders would receive intensive reentry programming prior to returning to the community and would be supervised in the community for at least six months before the end of their sentence.

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In New York...

- Offenders are provided “in-reach” services from the community to develop treatment and service options to offender upon release.

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In Massachusetts...

- Inmates who are being released (whether on parole or maxing out) are transported to a reentry center (which is actually the parole office) on the day of release. At the reentry center, the offender is provided with information about various community services, referrals can be made, and some on-site assistance can be provided.

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In Missouri....

- Mandatory case planning and linkage to the community occurs for serious mental health cases. These offenders are connected with a mental health provider prior to release.

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Discussion Questions...

- How can we enhance our efforts in creating effective release plans for "end of sentence" offenders?
- What do we do the same as with other offenders and what must we do differently?
- What does this mean for institutional operations?
- How can community providers/agencies be further engaged?
- How can the recidivism rates for "end of sentence" Connecticut offenders be reduced?

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