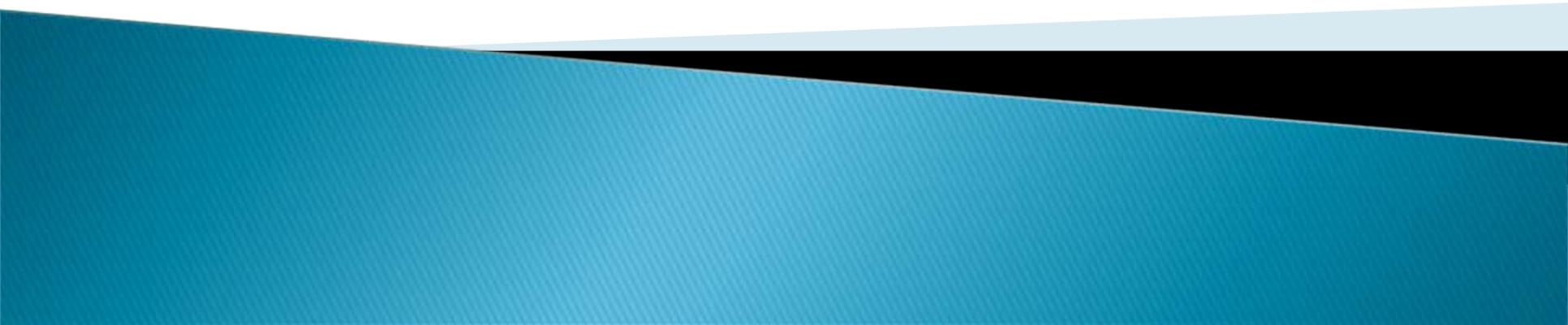


The Culture of Prison Life: Its Impact on Service Access and Medical Follow -Up



Quick Question....

- ▶ What is your biggest issue when interacting with the jail or prison in your community?

- ▶ What similarities are there between your organization and a correctional institution?

The Mission of Prisons and Jails

- ▶ The mission is to protect society by confining offenders in a controlled environment that is safe, secure, and humane, and that provide work or other self improvement opportunities to assist offenders in becoming law abiding citizens
- 

- ▶ **Primary responsibility: maintain security**
 - ▶ **Second responsibility: protect community**
 - ▶ **Third responsibility: protect inmates**
- 

- ▶ Jails and prisons are closed environments—prisons more so than jails.
 - ▶ Structure rules the day...who they see, when they see them...meals...work assignments
 - ▶ Counseling...education...health care
- 

- ▶ The correctional officer
 - ▶ Hierarchy–chain of command
 - ▶ Rules!!
 - ▶ Security and custody levels
 - ▶ Lack of privacy
- 

- ▶ Our mission can make YOUR mission difficult... but it doesn't have to be that way!

Until recently, comprehensive partnerships involving collaboration among key stakeholders to support successful re-entry simply did not exist.



So how can we work together?

- ▶ Communicate
 - ▶ Establish linkages
 - ▶ Build relationships
 - ▶ Be persistent, yet know your boundaries
 - ▶ Be strategic in what you ask for
 - ▶ Follow up and keep your word
 - ▶ Be pro-active
- 

Barriers are well known

- ✓ Mentally ill
- ✓ 75% have substance abuse problems, yet only 10% get treatment
- ✓ 45% lack H.S. education or GED
- ✓ Only 33% receive vocational training
- ✓ 55% have children under 18

(Prison data–NIC publications)



Issues...

- ▶ Meds given varies place to place upon release
 - ▶ Balancing security and confidentiality
 - ▶ Things will probably get tougher...budget cuts
 - ▶ Having a consistent contact on the inside, programs person
- 

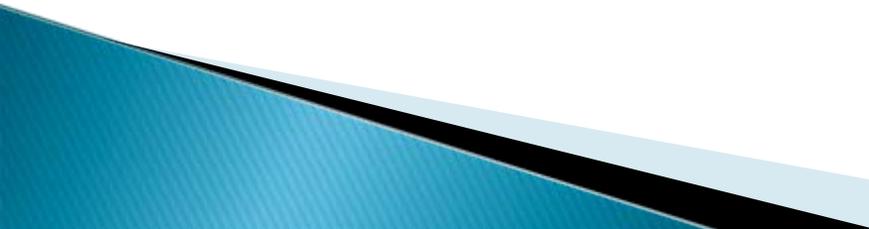
Security First, Then Programming

- ▶ Screening–what is involved
 - ▶ First impressions / Demeanor
 - ▶ Dress code–”all dressed up and nowhere to go”
 - ▶ Searches–what to expect
 - ▶ Cancellations due to lockdowns
 - ▶ Contraband–what is it and how does it get in?
- 

Once you're in...

- ▶ To avoid conflicts of interest, refrain from excessive contact with offenders
 - ▶ Do not act as a conduit for the offender with mail, messages, or any other activity
 - ▶ You WILL be tested and there will be attempts to manipulate you
 - ▶ Earn respect by showing respect and that you cannot be easily manipulated.
- 

Building a Professional Relationship

- Balancing professional courtesy and personal involvement can be challenging
 - Don't be compromised by showing favoritism
 - A simple act of kindness may be a violation of facility rules and an invitation for offenders to take advantage of you.
 - Small acts can cause big problems
 - It can lead to blackmail, manipulation, and even illegal acts.
 - Do not accept, offer, or provide items to offenders
- 

Professional Boundaries and manipulation

- ▶ Keep appropriate physical and emotional distance
 - ▶ Why is this issue of boundaries so important?
 - ▶ Isn't this just common sense?
 - ▶ Boundary issues can be very challenging
 - ▶ What are some absolute no's regarding boundaries?
 - ▶ What are some grey areas?
- 

Working with the transitioning client

- What are the issues and how do you fit in?
- Access to records and medication
- Lack of comprehensive discharge planning
- Anxiety and stress on the offender–leaving the institution
- Barriers the offender faces–finding a job, place to live, re–connecting with family, re–connecting with the community...and that is in addition to health issues
- Relapse is frequent
- Prison programs can work and are cost effective–not enough can take advantage of the programs

What Can You Do?

- ▶ Identify existing networks within your community
 - ▶ Expand your network
 - ▶ Keep networks active—it takes work!
 - ▶ Understand that there are distinct organizational cultures
 - ▶ Communicate!
 - ▶ Use technology to deliver services
 - ▶ Be accountable
- 

Closing thoughts

- ▶ Applying for grants
 - ▶ Bureau of Justice Assistance
 - ▶ Working with jails (over 3000) vs prisons
 - ▶ Working with probation and parole
 - ▶ Educating and training corrections employees
 - ▶ Conferences and workshops
 - ▶ Ask for orientation training
 - ▶ There's a lot of innovation going on in our prisons and jails
- 

Resources

- ▶ www.aca.org
- ▶ www.bja.gov
- ▶ www.nicic.gov Transition From Prison to the Community CD# 022905 (January 2008)

Questions??

- ▶ Kathy Black–Dennis, Director
- ▶ Standards, Accreditation and Professional Development
- ▶ American Correctional Association
 - ▶ kathyd@aca.org