

A hand is shown reaching upwards, with fingers spread, against a background of a grid of white circles. The background is a deep red color. The hand is positioned in the center-right of the frame, with the palm facing the viewer. The circles are arranged in a regular grid pattern, and the hand appears to be reaching towards one of them. The overall composition is abstract and symbolic.

EXPLORING **CORRECTIONS** *IN AMERICA*

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Foreword

We are trying to accomplish several goals with this book. First, we hope to provide a thorough introduction to the topic of corrections in America. We hope to cover as many aspects of corrections as possible and to cover them in as much depth as possible within the constraints of a typical semester of coursework. Second, we have attempted to provide a balanced account of the issues facing American corrections. We have tried to offer students a thorough and stimulating discussion of relevant correctional issues so that they can make their own judgments and arrive at an informed opinion regarding the process of corrections in America. Although we seek to be balanced and avoid bias, we do admit that we prefer solutions to correctional problems that are humane and respect the dignity of those persons who are incarcerated.

Usually one or two authors write a complete text. To achieve our goals, we have taken a different course of action. We have authored/co-authored those chapters for which we felt we had sufficient knowledge of the subject matter. For the remaining chapters, we have enlisted some of the leading authorities in their fields to make contributions as authors or co-authors. We have edited all the chapters in an effort to provide a good flow and fit throughout the text. As a result, we think that you, the student, will benefit by experiencing the expertise of a number of authors and still have a book that is a coherent and stimulating.

All three of us have worked as professionals in community-based or institutional correctional environments. We also currently teach as faculty members in university settings. We have tried to include not only what the current research has to say about our correctional process, but also explore some of the professional implications of those findings. We have tried to put a human face on the correctional process.

About 25 years ago, one of the authors took a corrections course at the university he was attending. The instructor, Bob Vasoli, took him and the other students on a tour of a state penitentiary. That course and

prison tour got him interested in corrections to the extent that he became a probation officer. From that experience, he continued his education and now teaches and does research addressing correctional issues. Hopefully, this book, along with your instructor, will get you interested in corrections. It is not likely that all of you will choose to become corrections officials, but perhaps some of you will choose that vocation. It can be a challenging and exciting career. It is our hope that this text and your teacher will get you more interested in corrections and more knowledgeable about this important area of criminal justice.

We want to thank Gina White Benedict for her assistance with this text and Kimberly Dodson for preparing the Student Study Guide, Instructor's Guide, and Power Point presentation. We also want to thank the staff at Anderson Publishing Co. for their encouragement and support. The Anderson staff are a joy to work with. We are especially indebted to Ellen Boyne, our project editor who has made this a better book.

John T. Whitehead
Joycelyn Pollock
Michael Braswell

Should We "Hurt" or "Help" Offenders?

All types of offenders are tried and convicted of all types of crimes, ranging from passing bad checks and theft of property to planning and carrying out the murder of another person. As human beings we often feel that those criminals who physically harm an innocent victim should themselves experience similar pain. While our laws, except in capital cases, don't support an "eye for an eye" justice, human desire to punish those who commit acts of violence against us runs deep throughout human history. There are other persons who believe we should attempt to understand why criminals, even violent ones, act the way they do and try to correct their behavior. These persons would be more supportive of encouraging and helping offenders to change into law-abiding, productive citizens. They would be more supportive of rehabilitation than punishment.

1. Which of these approaches do you feel is most appropriate?
2. Why do you feel your choice is more effective in correcting offenders?
3. What might be a just balance between punishing and helping offenders to change?

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