

DAVID LESTER

# CORRECTIONAL COUNSELING & REHABILITATION

4TH EDITION

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# CORRECTIONAL COUNSELING & REHABILITATION

4TH EDITION



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## **Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation, Fourth Edition**

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# Foreword

If an individual knew relatively little about correctional counseling and rehabilitation, but wished to know much more, this book could give him or her an excellent grounding in this rapidly growing field. If a reader already was somewhat familiar with the field—or even well-acquainted with it—and wished to become updated, *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation*, whose main authors are Patricia Van Voorhis, Michael Braswell, and David Lester, could again provide what is needed.

In addition, the following would apply: Even if an individual had already begun to believe that correctional practice may be little more than a conflict-centered and bleak (albeit societally necessary) endeavor—for instance, one in which institutional staff can do little more than remain distant from inmates or be largely pitted against them, one in which probation officers can and perhaps should do little more than provide restrictions, monitoring, and minimal assistance, and one in which hardly any knowledge exists regarding how to help offenders genuinely change for the better—this book could provide considerable evidence to the contrary. It could give that person much to think about. Moreover, even if that individual were forming the impression that correctional practice is still a primitive, largely unarticulated collection of activities, and that offender rehabilitation is an essentially unattainable—not just difficult—goal, this book's information could well expand his or her awareness and might significantly alter both views.

Taken together, the book's 14 well-sequenced chapters reveal corrections to be a field that has made major advances in the past four decades, one that has evolved a definite, though still growing, identity. In its detailed and well-referenced pages, *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* shows not only that a good deal of knowledge and practical experience has been accumulated and organized during those years, but that many professional and support staff have been *using* much of it, in institutional and community settings alike. The services these men and women have provided have been directed toward: (1) addressing offenders' here-and-now needs—that is, at helping these youths and adults, and others who might support them, improve their everyday life; (2) enhancing these individuals' *long-term* adjustment; and (3) helping to create a safer, more positive immediate environment and broader overall community. In these respects, their collective efforts vis-à-vis offenders have been focused on and have ranged from immediate practical issues as well as crises (e.g., in institutions), on the one hand, to major changes in attitudes and to similar improvements in coping skills, in understanding of self and others, and in overall modes of adjustment (e.g., regarding post-institutional living), on the other.

The principal authors and the several others who join them describe today's correctional counseling and rehabilitation, within the United States and Canada, under broad headings or subject areas: "A Philosophical and Professional Framework . . ." (Chapters 1-3), "Offender Assessment, Diagnosis, and Classification" (Chapters 4-5), "Foundations for Correctional Counseling and Treatment" (Chapters 6-9), "Group and Family Approaches" (Chapters 10-11), and "Effective Correctional Intervention: What Works?" (Chapters 12-14). The following details regarding the first two areas might help convey some of the flavor and nature of this book.

In Part One of the book, Michael Braswell sets correctional treatment (alternatively called counseling) within a framework of humane values and goals. He emphasizes that an empathic, in fact compassion-based, approach and attitude, by the counselor toward the offender, is central to positive change. Specifically, it is essential to the development of a level of trust and two-way communication that, in turn, can open the door to possible offender growth that is based on self-exploration and the experiencing of a genuine, caring relationship. The author also emphasizes that, however one may feel about the offender's past behavior, that individual is still a human being and should be treated as such. Although the author's examples center on adult-to-adult interactions, in institutional settings, his concepts also apply in other settings and to juveniles.

In the next chapter, Braswell provides an overview of what correctional counseling tries to achieve and of how it attempts to do so. Here, besides introducing the main institutional and community-centered goals of counseling, the author reviews certain features (e.g., listening and observing skills) that have long seemed essential to effective counseling, *irrespective* of its setting. He also touches on the question of: just what *is* effective counseling? How is it defined and measured?

Concluding Part One is Jeffrey Schrink's very realistic description of the correctional counselor's role—that is, his or her specific job—particularly in juvenile and adult institutions. Presented are the counselor's: (1) types and range of basic duties and responsibilities; (2) examples of typical daily activities; and (3) issues, problems, and challenges he or she faces, together with general working conditions. Among these issues are confidentiality requirements and other ethical considerations, the need to "wear two hats" (one treatment-focused, one security-oriented), large and diverse caseloads, prison overcrowding, racial and ethnic skewing, excessive paperwork, and stress. This chapter makes it clear that correctional counselors perform critical and highly responsible functions, which are by no means simple or easy, and which require considerable flexibility, personal maturity, and—very often—teamwork.

Part Two of *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* begins with Joyce Carbonell and Robin Perkins' chapter on assessment and diagnosis (A & D) of offenders. The authors define and illustrate mental health assessment, discuss its importance, and highlight the special information that correctional staff can provide to persons responsible for offender assessment and diagnosis. They then

introduce the official manual of the American Psychiatric Association (“DSM-IV”) that is used by professionals who formally assess/diagnose individual criminal offenders and other populations. The authors also describe—necessarily briefly—the major types of techniques (interviews, intelligence tests, personality tests) used in A & D; and finally, they alert the readers to key legal issues that usually require assessment-based inputs, to the courts, from correctional mental health specialists. Because this chapter’s subject matter is especially wide-ranging, the authors can touch on most of its topics only lightly. They meet this challenge of “broad scope” via a careful selection of examples, particularly in connection with DSM-IV categories (e.g., substance abuse/dependency, personality disorders, and psychotic disorders) most often found in correctional settings, and/or commonly associated with significant management problems.

In the next chapter, Patricia Van Voorhis reviews one of corrections’ most rapidly growing and increasingly utilized technologies of the past two decades: offender classification, particularly for purposes of caseload management (e.g., allocation of staff resources), improving institutional adjustment, and overall treatment planning. The author describes and discusses several classification instruments, approaches, and/or conceptual systems that are designed to systematically and relatively objectively (in contrast to more subjectively and mostly clinically) determine the offender’s: (1) level of risk (e.g., of escape attempts or of recidivism) and of needed community supervision/control; (2) programming needs (e.g., vocational or mental health); and (3) level of psychological development, and/or personality type. Systematic classification assumes that differing types are associated with differences in treatment goals, in treatment methods, and in degrees of program success, and with differing strategies for improving institutional adjustment itself. The author also discusses three increasingly recognized “principles of effective classification” (e.g., offender risk, needs, and responsivity); finally, she presents various cautions and requirements relating to the use of offender classification, and she mentions likely future directions in this area.

Having first presented a philosophical framework for thinking about correctional counseling and rehabilitation; having next provided an overview of what this counseling tries to achieve and of the certain skills and sensitivities needed to implement it; having also described typical roles, task, and challenges of the correctional counselor; and, with Carbonell and Perkins, having then reviewed and discussed assessment, diagnostic, and classification approaches designed to determine how offenders might best be managed and assisted, the principal authors next describe specific counseling methods and techniques. They begin these descriptions by presenting, in Part Three (“Foundations . . .”) of the book, several *major mechanisms and factors* (e.g., *forces, stimuli, and conditions*) that are believed to underlie prosocial and even antisocial development, adjustment, and other changes. As the authors do this, they also present the *key concepts, features, and procedures* that describe and define many of corrections’ major counseling or rehabilitation approaches. It is these respective approaches,



interventions, or systems that, taken together, give this field its present character or overall identity.

The principal authors first present the mechanisms and factors that are central to, and that mutually differentiate, each of the following, broad *theoretical frameworks*: (1) Psychoanalytic theory and concepts; (2) classical and operant conditioning; (3) social learning—and conditions as well as types of individuals that best facilitate it; and (4) cognitive-level learning per se. Item three, social learning, commonly involves learning and change via: (a) observation and imitation of other persons (e.g., of prosocial or antisocial role models); and (b) direct rehearsing of given behaviors and roles—in each case, as distinguished from (c) simply or mainly associating a relatively discrete stimulus (e.g., the drinking of alcohol) with a particular response (e.g., a sensory discomfort or a physical pain). With item four, cognitive approaches, change often centers on: (a) direct classroom or other didactic-type training in *how to think* more effectively and in overcoming one's faulty assumptions and/or excuses; and on (b) the explicit, and again relatively direct, teaching—by staff—of new attitudes and values. Psychodynamic approaches, on the other hand, often center on: (a) overcoming internal conflicts, early and more recent traumas, and/or disturbing impulses, expectations, and beliefs, via (b) self-understanding that is acquired during a “transference [relationship] with a trusted therapist.” A key assumption is that, if the preceding occurs, genuine and lasting changes in one's attitudes, values, and dysfunctional adjustment patterns will then *follow*. Mechanisms or factors that operate in this, the analytic framework, include desires, fantasies, fears, and so on.

In short, within each of those chapters the authors describe and explain—clearly and concretely—counseling and rehabilitation approaches whose key concepts, features, and procedures directly reflect the mechanisms and factors presented in that same chapter. These approaches—to name but a few—include: depth counseling or therapy (*analytic* framework); token economies, systematic desensitization, and exposure therapy (*conditioning*); the Achievement Place model, structured learning training, and social skills training (*social learning*); rational emotive therapy, cognitive skills and living skills programs, moral education programming, and aggression replacement training (*cognitive*). In many of these approaches, the mechanisms and factors that operate and thereby contribute to change are, collectively, integral to more than any *one* of the four theoretical frameworks. For instance, the Achievement Place (AP) model utilizes not only social learning mechanisms (e.g., modeling and rehearsing) but that of operant conditioning (viz., a token economy). Similarly, aggression replacement training (ART) draws not only on social learning (as reflected in its structured learning component) but on cognitive-level inputs (e.g., moral values training) as well. In any event, the authors give their accounts of the various approaches' added meaning (in the sense of greater understandability as well as utility) by explicitly linking the respective methods/techniques with the underlying mechanisms and factors on which they rely in order to help offenders change their delinquency- or crime-related behaviors, attitudes, skill deficits, and understandings.

Chapters 10-13 center on group and milieu therapy, family therapy, the treatment of sex offenders, and treatment of substance abusers, respectively. These chapters, which are richly detailed and highly informative, clearly describe the nature and theoretical bases of these approaches and efforts. They also show that major advances have occurred within these areas—particularly the last three mentioned—in recent years. Moreover, they indicate the following: As with the Achievement Place model, with ART, and with other approaches described in earlier chapters, *two or more* of the above-mentioned theoretical frameworks (e.g., the analytic and social learning, or conditioning and the cognitive) often provide the main underpinnings of these broad methods (group/milieu/family) and of interventions with the specified populations (sex offenders and substance abusers).

This book's highlighting of mechanisms and factors that underlie the several approaches can help its readers—students, active practitioners, and others—understand *how* correctional counseling can facilitate positive change and why. In addition, the book's descriptions and discussions of corrections' numerous approaches can inform its readers about *what* and *how much* exists. It can also help these individuals see that certain methods/techniques may well be more appropriate, more practical, and even more possible in some settings than in others. Among these latter, for instance, would be: (1) institutional versus community-based settings, or certain groupings within each; and (2) opportunities as well as resources for: (a) short- or intermediate-term (e.g., 3-to-12 month) programs only, in contrast to the longer-term, or for (b) single-module programming rather than the multiple and/or sequential module.

Similarly, *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* can show that there exists a long-standing and still expanding body of evidence that suggests the following: *Whatever* settings are involved, some methods and techniques are likely to have greater potential value for certain kinds of offenders than for others. As a result, if these approaches are then adequately implemented (and this may sometimes necessitate particular staff), they are more likely to be positively received by those individuals than by others.

Besides being of considerable value to students and direct service providers (even the seasoned), this book, I believe, could give many administrators, program planners, managers, and other policymakers, as well as facilitators, an increased or renewed awareness of the following: Although correctional counseling still has very far to go; although a great deal is still unknown about treatment and about many offenders themselves; and although many valuable approaches have probably not yet been conceived, let alone tried and widely applied, correctional counseling is already a maturing discipline. Although it is still growing and actively exploring, and is fluid and relatively open in those respects, it can—as a discipline—be characterized as having definitely completed “adolescence.” Not only do personnel within this field perform many highly responsible—in fact, essential—functions, and do so in accordance with recognized standards, but, as is clear from this book, the field possesses and reg-

ularly utilizes many sound concepts and strong empirical foundations. The latter is true despite the many differing, sometimes disparate, approaches that collectively comprise it, and in spite of its multifaceted, substantively broad, and loose identity.

At any rate, correctional counseling *is not*, today, a field in which the following applies: Staff, when interacting with offenders: (1) have little choice but to “do their own thing” and to perhaps do so almost wholly on “feelings and intuition”; (2) have little to draw on by way of relatively systematized and spelled out areas of knowledge; or (3) might just as well “flip a coin” as a basis for choosing more existing approaches. Furthermore, it is no longer defensible to argue that little reliable information exists about what is likely to help many individual offenders (including certain *types* of offenders) change for the better.

In light of the above, *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation*, I believe, could give many of these individuals good reason for increasing their support of particular approaches or types of approaches, or for perhaps being open to a wider range of approaches. Simultaneously, it could help them become more cautious about given approaches, and appropriately discriminating with respect to them. All in all, its detailed descriptions plus its cross-approach comparisons could help these policymakers and facilitators better determine which of several known methods/techniques might be especially feasible and useful in their particular setting, and which ones might *not*. (This would apply to counselors and other professional and support staff, as well.) It could also help them determine whether and how an apparently promising approach (or even a presently used one) might be modified in order to become *more* useful within the current operation. Finally, this book could also help those individuals become more appreciative, supportive of, and more cautious regarding certain staff or staff characteristics, and more cognizant of the advantages of periodic staff training, retraining, and professional development.

For such reasons I would strongly recommend this book not only to the above-mentioned audiences, but to individuals, such as consultants, conference planners, and lecturers, who could disseminate its information to practitioners and others in the field of corrections.

Some final points. Chapters 12 and 13, which focus on sex offenders and substance abusers, are not essentially reorganizations of the material that appeared as a single chapter in this book's third edition. Instead, they are new, considerably expanded, and more integrative. They indicate that increasingly effective approaches are being identified within these areas, as are others that show less or little promise. In Chapter 14, Paul Gendreau and Claire Goggin round out the book's section on effectiveness by concisely summarizing and discussing what several hundred scientific studies—conducted over four decades—have shown regarding the question, “Which intervention strategies reduce recidivism, and which do not?” This chapter provides important general, as well as specific, directions for future program development, and it comprises a fitting conclusion to the book as a whole.

Like the policymakers, practitioners, and other professional audiences already mentioned, students, in particular, will find *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* very accessible: Each of its chapters is well organized, excellently highlighted, and furnishes good discussion questions and a list of key concepts and terms. All in all, the book provides a clear, accurate, and useful picture of this wide-ranging and challenging field.

Together with the principal authors (Van Voorhis, Braswell, and Lester) and the other authors/coauthors already mentioned, Gail Hurst and Brent Morrow are to be commended for their contributions to this work.

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