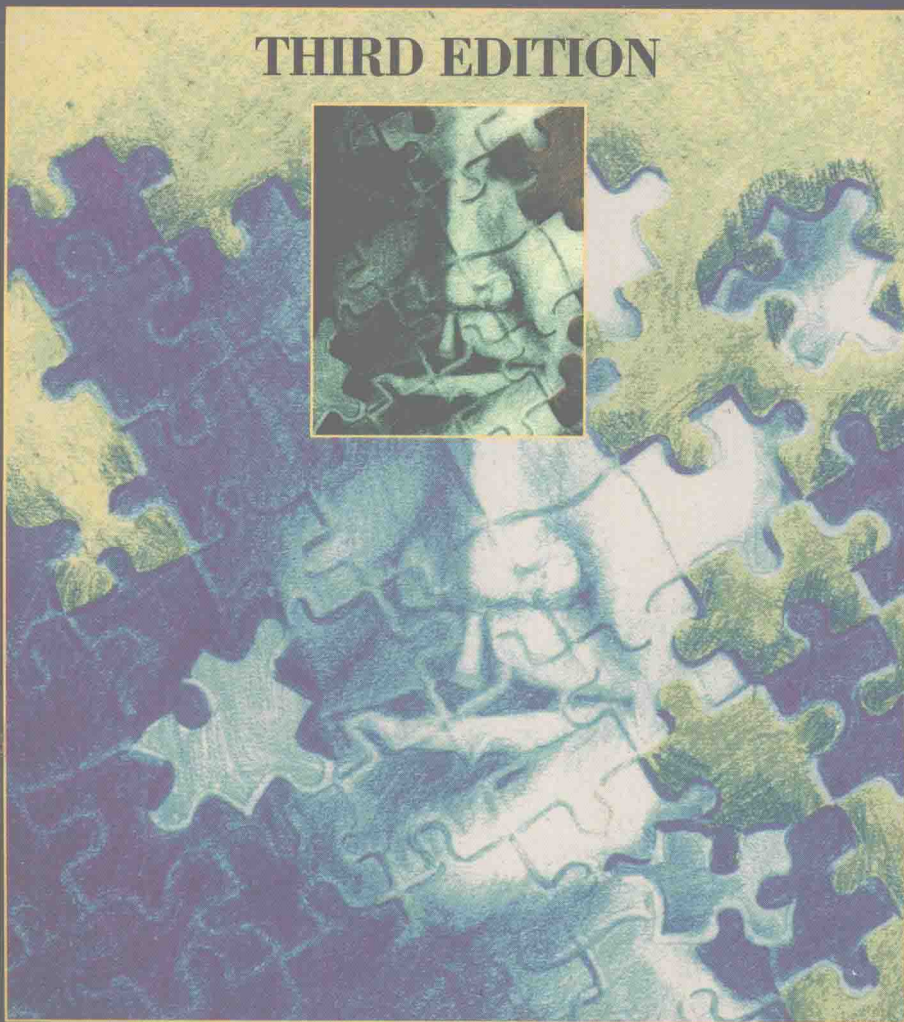


# **CORRECTIONAL COUNSELING and REHABILITATION**

**THIRD EDITION**



**Patricia Van Voorhis  
Michael Braswell  
David Lester**

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# Foreword

The third edition of *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation* (formerly *Correctional Counseling*), by Patricia Van Voorhis, Michael Braswell, and David Lester, provides an excellent introduction to the fundamentals of correctional counseling and intervention. The text is primarily oriented to serving the needs of:

1. upper level undergraduates and entry level graduate students in criminal justice programs or other disciplines that have a corrections specialization,
2. corrections front-line staff in community, probation, and prison settings involved in service delivery to offenders, and
3. criminal justice policy makers whose mandate includes correctional treatment programs.

In addition, the text is of use to specialists for teaching “introductory” courses on correctional counseling and preparing training workshops for corrections practitioners on the delivery of specific types of treatment services (e.g., role modeling, see Chapter 8).

In the first two chapters, Michael Braswell reviews the history and purposes of correctional counseling. Braswell does not sugarcoat his message. He remarks that the field has been characterized by panaceas and, at times, a sense of hopelessness (e.g., Martinson and “nothing works”). This is a sobering message for initiates in the field who sometimes assume counseling is not an arduous process and invariably results in happy endings. Braswell, however, remains an optimist—and rightly so—about the possibility of effecting positive changes in offenders. First, the research outcome data supports this premise. Second, Braswell adheres to a phenomenological perspective, which is the most optimistic of personality theories. While this model has not typically been associated with programs that reduce offender recidivism, its emphasis on the importance of relationships cannot be underestimated. Without the qualities of respect, honesty, fairness, and warmth, the counseling relationship is likely to flounder, no matter what specific behavioral change techniques are employed.

In Chapter 3, Jeffrey Schrink outlines the “practicalities” of correctional counseling. I particularly enjoyed the section on problems and challenges. I only wish when I first began work as a counselor in prisons that I had been offered wise counsel on such issues as institutional support, role duality, coercion, and the YAVIS syndrome, amongst others. In addition, I commend the author for alerting readers to the crucial ethical principles of counseling and therapy and recommend careful attention to this section.

Chapters 4 and 5 concern themselves with assessment issues. Joyce Carbonell and Robin Perkins review various components of the DSM-IV system (e.g., psychiatric disorders), assessment techniques and legal issues. Patricia Van Voorhis reviews offender classification systems which so dominate the assessment field in corrections. Besides introducing the reader to the important classification principles of risk, need, and responsivity, she clearly outlines three of the most important psychological classification systems (i.e., I-level) and comments on some new directions in correctional classification.

Chapters 6 through 9 are concise accounts of the major theoretical approaches found today in correctional counseling. David Lester and Patricia Van Voorhis have contributed most of the work in this section. I would remind students/novice counselors that these theoretical approaches must be learned so thoroughly as to be second nature. As noted in Chapter 14, many counselors, all too often, seem to have only a passing familiarity with the key clinical concepts of each theory which is one reason so many offender treatment programs are of poor quality.

Space limitations prevent me from discussing each chapter in the detail it deserves, thus some brief selected comments must suffice: (1) psychodynamic approaches (Chapter 6) are not entirely relics of the past—the functioning of the ego and defense mechanisms are still germane to effective counseling; (2) the principles of operant conditioning (Chapter 7) are absolutely essential concepts. Without mastering them, no counselor can hope to be effective with offender clients; (3) Chapter 8 offers an excellent summary of how to role model prosocial behavior. Two good examples of effective modeling programs are supplied; and (4) for the first time I have seen in the literature, the major approaches to cognitive therapies with offenders are profiled together in Chapter 9. In the field of human services, there is an unfortunate tendency to view cognitive programs as homogeneous entities. This chapter illustrates that some of the cognitive therapies are quite distinct from each other.

Chapters 10 to 13 acquaint the reader with some of the important group therapeutic modalities for offenders. My biases are showing here—obviously group and milieu therapies (Chapter 10, David Lester) and self-help movements (Chapter 12, Mark Hamm) are important—but some of the best recidivism outcome data emanates from the family intervention literature (see Chapter 11, Patricia Van Voorhis, Michael Braswell, and Brent Morrow).

The final section of the book looks at effectiveness, endeavoring to identify “what works” in correctional intervention (Chapter 14) and to review the most effective approaches for two specific types of problems—sex offending and substance abuse (Chapter 13). As Gail Hurst presents the current technology for treating sex offenders and substance abusers, it is clear that the approaches she mentions are relevant to these specific populations. However, it is somewhat ironic that the most effective treatment models fit within the broader categories of interventions found to be effective with *general* high risk offenders—modeling of prosocial behaviors, cognitive behavioral programs, and relapse prevention.

Finally, Chapter 14 attempts to synthesize the voluminous treatment literature into several basic principles of effectiveness. Clearly, interventions that consist of most of the principles noted produce substantive reductions in offender recidivism. The authors, Paul Gendreau and Claire Goggin, note, however, that in the "real world," many programs are not functioning as well as they might. Common problems in this regard are described.

In conclusion, this, the third edition of *Correctional Counseling and Rehabilitation (Correctional Counseling)*, provides a valuable service to the corrections literature as an introductory sourcebook on theories and practices of correctional counseling. Hopefully, professionals embarking upon careers in corrections will be stimulated by this volume and will make a meaningful contribution to this literature as practitioners and/or scholars. If the field of corrections is to keep a humane face and aspire to any notion of effectiveness, effective correctional counseling offers about the only avenue by which to achieve these goals.

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# Contents

	Acknowledgments	iii
	Contributing Authors	iv
	Foreword	v
<b>Part One</b>	<b>A Philosophical and Professional Framework for Correctional Counseling</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Correctional Treatment and the Human Spirit</b> <i>Michael Braswell</i>	<b>3</b>
	Introduction	3
	An Historical Context for Treatment	4
	The Lost Art of Relationships	7
	Discipline and Obedience	9
	PACTS: An Existential Model for Change	11
	Key Concepts and Terms	21
	Discussion Questions	22
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>The Purpose of Correctional Counseling and Treatment</b> <i>Michael Braswell</i>	<b>23</b>
	Goals of Offender Counseling and Treatment	24
	The Counseling Process	26
	Types of Correctional Counseling	30
	Effectiveness of Offender Counseling and Treatment	36
	Correctional Counseling versus Psychotherapy	38
	Conclusion	39
	Key Concepts and Terms	39
	Discussion Questions	40
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Understanding the Correctional Counselor</b> <i>Jeffrey Shrink</i>	<b>41</b>
	Hiring Standards for Correctional Counselors	42
	Where the Correctional Counselor Works	43
	The Correctional Counselor as Part of a Team	44
	The Duties and Responsibilities of Correctional Counselors	45
	Special Issues, Problems, and Challenges	48
	Prison Overcrowding	48
	Lack of Institutional Support	49
	Racial and Ethnic Skewing	49
	Maintaining Confidentiality and Other Ethical Considerations	50
	Large Caseloads	54

	Heavy Volume of Paperwork	54
	Nonvolunteer Clients	55
	Wearing Two Hats	56
	Limited Opportunity for Reality Testing	56
	Being "Conned"	56
	"Conning" the Client	57
	Emphasis on Failure	57
	Stress and Burnout	58
	Conclusion: Portrait of a Correctional Counselor	59
	Notes	59
	Key Concepts and Terms	60
	Discussion Questions	60
<b>Part Two</b>	<b>Offender Assessment, Diagnosis, and Classification</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Diagnosis and Assessment of Criminal Offenders</b>	<b>63</b>
	<i>Joyce L. Carbonell and Robin Perkins</i>	
	Introduction	63
	The Role of the Correctional Staff	65
	The DSM-IV	66
	Mood Disorders	67
	Psychotic Disorders	68
	Mental Retardation	70
	Personality Disorders	71
	Substance Abuse and Dependence	73
	Suicide	74
	Techniques of Assessment and Diagnosis	75
	Interviews	75
	Intelligence Testing	75
	Personality Tests	76
	Legal Issues and Mental Health Assessment	77
	Conclusion	79
	Key Concepts and Terms	79
	Discussion Questions	80
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>An Overview of Offender Classification Systems</b>	<b>81</b>
	<i>Patricia Van Voorhis</i>	
	Purposes and Principles of Effective Classification	82
	The Risk Principle	82
	The Needs Principle	83
	The Responsivity Principle	84
	Types of Commonly Used Classification Systems	86
	Risk Assessment Systems	87
	Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI)	89
	Needs Assessment Systems	91
	Psychological Classification Systems	93
	Future Directions in Correctional Classification	101
	More Detailed Assessments of Criminogenic Needs for Special Populations	101
	Artificial Intelligence and Management Information Systems	103

	Conclusion	103
	Notes	105
	Key Concepts and Terms	105
	Discussion Questions	105
<b>Part Three</b>	<b>Foundations for Correctional Counseling and Treatment</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Psychoanalytic Therapy</b>	<b>109</b>
	<i>David Lester and Patricia Van Voorhis</i>	
	Psychoanalytic Theory	110
	Psychoanalytic Therapy	113
	Psychoanalytic Approaches to Crime	114
	The Case of an Angry Exhibitionist	114
	Aggressive Delinquents	116
	Ego Deficits	116
	Ego Failures	116
	Ego Strengths	118
	The Delinquent Superego	118
	The Sources	119
	Implications for Treatment	121
	Psychoanalysis for Criminals	122
	Conclusion	124
	Note	125
	Key Concepts and Terms	125
	Discussion Questions	125
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Radical Behavior Interventions</b>	<b>127</b>
	<i>David Lester, Michael Braswell, and Patricia Van Voorhis</i>	
	Classical Conditioning	129
	Operant Conditioning	133
	Decreasing Problematic Behaviors	137
	Radical Behavioral Approaches with Offenders	138
	The Stability of Newly Acquired or Decelerated Behaviors	139
	Conclusion	141
	Key Concepts and Terms	143
	Discussion Questions	143
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Social Learning Models</b>	<b>145</b>
	<i>Patricia Van Voorhis</i>	
	Who Makes a Good Role Model?	147
	The Process of Observational Learning	151
	Social Learning Interventions in Corrections	155
	Achievement Place	156
	Structured Learning Training/Skill Streaming	156
	Conclusion	160
	Note	161
	Key Concepts and Terms	161
	Discussion Questions	161

Chapter 9	Cognitive Therapies <i>David Lester and Patricia Van Voorhis</i>	163
	Cognitive Restructuring Approaches 165	
	Rational Emotive Therapy 165	
	The Techniques of Rational Emotive Therapy 166	
	Applications to Offenders 167	
	Criminal Personality Groups 169	
	Cognitive Skills Approaches 172	
	Direct Decision Therapy 173	
	Cognitive Skills Programs for Offenders 175	
	Moral Education Approaches 178	
	Aggression Replacement Training (ART) 181	
	Conclusion 183	
	Key Concepts and Terms 184	
	Discussion Questions 185	
<b>Part Four</b>	<b>Group and Family Approaches to Correctional Counseling and Treatment</b>	<b>187</b>
Chapter 10	Group and Milieu Therapy <i>David Lester</i>	189
	Applying Standard Systems of Psychotherapy to Group Counseling 192	
	Person-Centered Therapy 192	
	Transactional Analysis 194	
	Transactional Analysis with Offenders 194	
	Systems of Group Counseling 197	
	Psychodrama 197	
	Treating Offenders with Psychodrama 199	
	Milieu Therapy 201	
	Guided Group Interaction 204	
	Reality Therapy 207	
	The Techniques of Reality Therapy 207	
	The Techniques in Action 209	
	Reality Therapy in an Institution 210	
	Working with Addicts 212	
	Recent Trends 213	
	The Evaluation of Programs 213	
	Group Work with Particular Types of Offenders 214	
	Conclusion 216	
	Key Concepts and Terms 217	
	Discussion Questions 217	
Chapter 11	Family Therapy <i>Patricia Van Voorhis, Michael Braswell, and Brent Morrow</i>	219
	History and Overview of Family Therapy 222	
	Psychoanalytic Family Therapy 225	
	Communications Family Therapy 227	
	Structural Family Therapy 228	
	Behavioral and Social Learning Models 230	
	Family Therapy and Criminal Justice Applications 232	

	Conclusion	237
	Note	238
	Key Concepts and Terms	239
	Discussion Questions	239
Chapter 12	The Offender Self-Help Movement as Correctional Treatment	241
	<i>Mark S. Hamm</i>	
	The Organization of Prisoner Self-Help Groups	242
	The De-Stigmatization Groups	243
	Groups for the Addicted and Disabled	246
	The Ethnic Groups	247
	The Human Potential Groups	248
	Conclusion	252
	Notes	252
	Key Concepts and Terms	253
	Discussion Questions	253
<b>Part Five</b>	<b>Effective Correctional Intervention: What Works?</b>	<b>255</b>
Chapter 13	Treating Sex Offending and Substance Abuse Populations	257
	<i>Gail Hurst</i>	
	The Role of Assessment	257
	Treatment Strategies for Substance and Sex Abusers	260
	Substance Abusers	260
	Pharmacological Approaches	260
	Cognitive and Behavioral-Based Approaches	261
	Goals of Treatment	262
	Effectiveness of Treatment Programs	263
	Sex Offenders	264
	Organic Strategies	265
	Behavioral Strategies	265
	Cognitive Strategies	266
	Effectiveness of Treatment Programs	267
	Relapse Prevention	268
	Key Concepts and Terms	269
	Discussion Questions	269
Chapter 14	Correctional Treatment: Accomplishments and Realities	271
	<i>Paul Gendreau and Claire Goggin</i>	
	Accomplishments	271
	Results of the Meta-Analyses	272
	The Principles of Effective Intervention	273
	The Realities of Correctional Treatment	274
	Results of the CPAI Research	275
	Notes	279
	Key Concepts and Terms	279
	Discussion Questions	280
	References	281
	Subject Index	313
	Name Index	327

## Part One

# A Philosophical and Professional Framework for Correctional Counseling

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The intention of Part One is to encourage the reader to develop a personal sense of what correctional counseling is about. Such an awareness includes a general understanding of such existential issues as *paradox* and *commitment* in both personal and professional life situations. In addition to the personal perspective concerning helping issues, it is also important to examine more specifically the professional context of correctional counseling; that is, how it relates both formally and informally to the rest of the correctional process.

In Chapter 1, the personal dimension of correctional counseling is explored. The power of the relationship between counselors and offenders and how each is connected to the other is examined.

Chapter 2 addresses the various purposes of correctional counseling. Whether in institutional- or community-based settings, crisis intervention, education, and recreation are examples of different contexts in correctional environments in which counseling skills are utilized.

In Chapter 3, Jeffrey Schrink helps readers to better understand the world of corrections through the eyes of the correctional counselor. Particular attention is paid to such job stressors as: prison overcrowding, overabundance of paperwork, involuntary clients, large caseloads, inmate conning behaviors, and staff burnout.

Part One encourages the reader to become personally involved in the correctional counseling process, to understand that there is an inevitable blending of personal beliefs and professional feelings and practice. To the extent the goal of this section is realized, the remainder of the book will become more interesting and meaningful. Correctional counseling is more than learning about counseling techniques. It is also vitally involved with learning through experience; clarifying and developing one's own feelings and beliefs concerning helping others, particularly offenders.



## Chapter 1

# Correctional Treatment and the Human Spirit

Michael Braswell

## Introduction

The evolution of the study and practice of corrections has moved within the historical pendulum between the principle of retribution as endorsed by such holy writings as the Upanishads, Koran, and the Law of Moses, and the more rehabilitative philosophy of the New Testament as expressed in various reform movements. The tension between the two has been considerable in the inevitable ambiguity of our democratic society. Such ambiguity recognizes the need for social order and control yet at the same time stresses individual liberties and expression. Punishment and rehabilitation, emotion and reason reside together as our system of justice attempts to reach a more effective synthesis; a synthesis that will provide order and stability in the community in a humane way without diminishing the potential for positive change in most of the individuals who offend the community.

*To be a part of a justice system that is more humane for both the community at large and for the offender, correctional treatment will need to refocus on the power of relationship as a priority for positive change.* This refocusing will require correctional counselors and other treatment staff to more clearly view treatment technologies as a means to an end rather than as an end in themselves. In other words, corrections should place greater emphasis on the capacity and abilities of offenders to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with themselves, family, and staff.

One could suggest that such a goal is more natural or common sense and somewhat less clinical than others. Within this framework, the counselor or other professional uses the power of the counseling relationship to become the primary model for demonstrating self-discipline to the offender.

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Michael Braswell (1989). "Correctional Treatment and the Human Spirit: A Focus on Relationship." *Federal Probation* 53, 49-60. Reprinted with permission.



## An Historical Context for Treatment

In trying to bring the nonconforming offender to an accommodating point within the order of an established democratic community, corrections has run the gamut of treatment strategies and philosophies. Historically, most of the various treatment phases were somewhat fallacious; often we find a substantial difference between the claims surrounding new treatment programs and the reality of their implementation and results. From the more coercive programs of correctional hardliners who deny the value of rehabilitation to correctional liberals who are inclined to confuse a busy inmate services agenda with an effective one, legitimate treatment programs have often been replaced more quickly than new fall television shows.

Early efforts inspired by the Quakers attempted to influence offenders through religious instruction and reform. Post-Civil War efforts evolved from teaching inmates to read the Bible to mass liberal arts and vocational education programs. The congregate work environment, as exemplified by the Auburn prison model, spawned an emphasis upon the work ethic of the prison industry era. A recent trend along these lines has recurred with an eye toward having inmates pay their own way.

Starting in the 1950s, the **medical model** was implemented as the treatment approach of choice wherein criminality was to be treated in the same manner as a physical disease (i.e., diagnosis of problem, prescription, treatment, and cure). In reaction to this trend, the **behavioral science movement** emerged, embracing some elements of the medical model but perhaps being more compatible with the technology and engineering orientation of the hard sciences. Through scientific methods applied to human behavior, behavioral scientists contended that criminality could be eliminated. Some critics accused the behaviorists of "methodolatry," the worship of the scientific method or at least placing too much confidence in its infallibility (Braginsky & Braginsky, 1974; Koch, 1969). The more enthusiastic and even blatant claims attributed to behavioral treatment are demonstrated by McConnell's (1970) comments concerning a person possessing an antisocial personality:

No one owns his own personality. Your ego, or individuality, was forced on you by your genetic constitution and by the society into which you were born. You had no say about what kind of personality you acquired, and there's no reason to believe you should have the right to refuse to acquire a new personality if your old one is antisocial (1970).

**Therapeutic communities** in and out of prison also enjoyed some degree of popularity in the 1970s as evidenced by the success of such programs as Day-top, a drug treatment program. Common goals, personal sacrifice, and responsibility were advocated, notwithstanding outside criticisms ranging from charges of suspect qualifications of supervising staff to claims that some therapeutic communities encouraged a cultlike dependency in their members.