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Introduction to Community- Based Corrections

Herbert G. Callison



COMMUNITY- BASED CORRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY- BASED CORRECTIONS

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FOREWORD

The author of this text, Herbert Callison, is a dynamic man. Energetic and forceful, he perceives what is in disarray in a situation and skillfully rearranges it. Impelled by inner forces, he tries to lighten the troubles of others. I have observed in his work as executive director of The Villages, Inc., in Topeka, Kansas, the adeptness with which he harmonizes conflicting trends and purposes. I have seen him react with admirable calmness, self-control, and imperturbability when frustration and disappointment interrupt the smooth course of an action; when carefully thought-out efforts are met with angry criticism.

He recognizes the inequalities in life and that some people react to disappointment, anxiety, and deprivation with angry outbursts or stealthy malice. He does not condone. But he has no instinct to reinforce the blow-for-a-blow formula which is society's usual answer to its dissident members.

The author shifted from the institutional penal care of convicted offenders to the noninstitutional home care of orphans and neglected children, in the belief (which is also mine) that crime is the delayed and misdirected revenge of a wounded child. It may be too late to correct the injury, but it is not too late to correct the child's vengeful reactions—or to aggravate them. Herbert Callison has devoted his life thus far to managing the care of people who lacked the standards, models, and supports which most of us had as children and as adults. He has been the kind, just, and wise father to thousands of youths who had none—or a bad one. (He is, incidentally, also a real father.) Hundreds of young people imitate him as they grow up. A few may emulate his leadership and dedication; many will continue to be his students; many more, his great admirers.

From such a man comes this book of guidance for those joining the ranks of a profession that tries to straighten and lighten our lives' paths by corrective attention to human protesters and attackers. It is a company who have dedicated their careers to correcting the mistakes of others, which affect us all and cause us to add more mistakes.

One of our mistakes lies in our conception and application of imprisonment. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals' January 1973 proclamation declared: "The prison, the reformatory, and the jail have achieved only a shocking record of failure. . . . There is overwhelming

evidence that these institutions create crime rather than prevent it . . . !” What, then, is the remedy?

Controlling and caring for dissidents, hated by the community, sullen, hostile, and potentially violent, requires training, skill, and knowledge not possessed by the types of persons traditionally hired for this task. It requires a revised philosophy of correcting misdeeds. The St. Georges of a new profession will change established ways of thinking and acting and will learn how to avoid the vast energy waste of our present system. They will acquire the art of using minimum power to control and redirect their bitter and desperate fellows whose aberrance can cause great public injury. Their clients are society’s predators, its lawless ones, those who have exploded, wasted, hurt, and destroyed.

We have cast them out officially, but we want them returned to us as quickly and inexpensively as possible if they can live and let live in peace. Their families want them. Their friends want them.

At the right time, the touch of a skillful person with an idea can be a miraculous wand, awakening the miscreant to the new vision of life essential to transformation of character; arousing new hopes, new resolves, new dreams; stimulating ambition for ends to be attained not by force, stealth, or contrivance, but in peaceful, constructive ways.

For the most part, we still apply power clumsily to the difficult redirection of human outbursts. We contain them, but at such expense and waste! This is a book of better ways.

Herbert Callison presents clearly the details of the new idea for doing something with and for offenders. He proposes that the people most concerned with damage to property or person have a responsibility to participate in influencing the lives of the damagers. Hitherto, the so-called justice system has acted on the assumption that a person proven guilty of an offense should be taken for detention and punishment to some distant place—the more distant, the better. Contact between prisoner and community has been made as difficult as possible. When the time comes for the offenders to return, chastened and reformed, to earn livings, to reestablish friendships, perhaps to make redress for past sins, they go back almost as strangers to their communities; even, indeed, to their own wives or husbands and children.

The newer point of view, that of progressive criminology, which Herbert Callison systematically lays out, avoids taking offenders so far from the people they have lived with and even offended. His text is directly in line with the up-to-date conception of the transaction between offender and community. I envy the opportunity of teachers and ambitious students using it to follow in detail the logic and specifics presented by this brilliant teacher.

Karl A. Menninger, M.D., F.A.P.A.

PREFACE

For 7 years I worked in a prison (although it was called a reformatory). During that time I had the opportunity to review over 6000 inmates who were being considered for parole. Many returned to prison and gave me an opportunity to talk with them about their community experience; many did not come back to prison. For 3 years I was superintendent of a prerelease center—Riverview Release Center near Newton, Iowa—which gave me a chance to observe prisoners as they actually left the institutional setting and entered the community.

During those 10 years I reached a number of conclusions. First, that most offenders really want to stay outside the prison's walls. Second, that most correctional programs are designed to accommodate the state corrections department and not to help the prisoner. Third, that much could be done to assist the prisoner if the program were designed to help offenders resolve practical problems. Fourth, that accommodating the corrections department and helping offenders cope with practical problems are not incompatible.

Most of the offenders who did not return to prison and maintained contact with me indicated the basic reason they remained free had nothing to do with high school diplomas or vocational training certificates. The reason they did not commit any more crimes was that they became integrated into a community. They were reunited with loved ones; they established ties with friends and fellow employees; they believed they had a place in the community and a function to perform.

Many times, specific instances were cited—kindness shown by a fellow civilian employee, such as taking them fishing before they had means of transportation; an extra effort on the part of correctional personnel, especially correctional officers and probation and parole officers, to help them find a job or place to live; a member of a church or Alcoholics Anonymous group who invited them to dinner or otherwise encouraged their feeling part of the community.

Since 1965 I have been teaching in various colleges and universities in the midwest. Most of my students have been interested in occupations related to juvenile or adult corrections. It was obvious that most students would have to begin work before they could learn about the practical aspects of corrections. In general, textbooks and teaching methods provide an ideal view of corrections. The students learn the hypothetical assumptions and the theories upon which

correctional programs are based but little about the actual programs. There is little opportunity for them to discuss both negative and positive aspects of an issue and little chance for appraisal or analysis during class time.

These two experiences resulted in a synthesis of purpose. To write a textbook that on one hand gave corrections students a practical view of corrections, and on the other hand gave them some theoretical knowledge. I hope that this purpose will be accomplished by this text, which is full of examples of programs as well as of the assumptions behind them. It contains a great deal of analysis and much opinion. The exercises are designed to stimulate discussion. The content is based on my experience as both teacher and practitioner.

Because of the long history of failure associated with correctional programs and especially with action labeled "rehabilitation," I have made some attempt to talk in other terms—*community-based corrections* is cited as an example of corrections focusing on the community. Corrections focusing on the community also includes programs that could be housed in jails and walled institutions. The term "redirection" is substituted in many instances for the term "rehabilitation." The philosophy of *reintegration* is evident throughout, even though the term may not be used on each page. At some points, the term "integration" is used, referring to those offenders who have not been incarcerated for extensive periods and, consequently, do not need to be *reintegrated*. All these changes in terminology are not attempts to confuse the reader but to use terms that are not prejudiced by previous misuse or failure. They are also an attempt to use terms that encourage a more practical image on the part of the reader.

I hope that this book can be the basis for both correctional practitioners and students to learn enough about corrections focusing on the community to work in the field. It is my hope that it can serve as a basis for the practical application of theories they may learn from others.

It is certainly not intended to be *the answer* but to provide *some* ideas that can be applied to *some* offenders. It is intended to provide a few answers *for* a few offenders. More important, it is intended to answer some of the questions that are now being raised by politicians, correctional administrators, and the public. These questions are based on the failure of evaluations to show that many programs *succeed in rehabilitating the offender*; the discouragement of many people about the cost-effective use of correctional programs; and the hue and cry over high crime rates and increased violence in our society.

All these questions cannot be ignored by correctional administrators or teachers. Perhaps none of them will be answered in the near future. It is my hope, however, that this text will plant some seeds which can lead to further discussion, research, and conclusions that might be able, someday, to answer some of these questions.

Herbert G. Callison

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