PSYSCO-SOCIAL PROFILE OF NEWLY RELEASED PRISON INMATES

1/ Post-release shock and disorientation (no fixed bearings)
2/ Lack of Continuity/follow through (flaky behavior)
3/ Suppressed hostility (seething rage and undifferentiated hate)
4/ Lethargy: often extreme social withdrawal and psychological denial
5/ Deep-based depression (frequently chronic) resulting in maladaptive behavior
6/ Financially destitute with a growing sense of anxiety and desperation
7/ False expectations and illusions on a multitude of personal and social levels
8/ Intense range of fears: personal failure, social and vocational rejection, etc...
9/ Severe alienation (man from Mars0: often intense, long-term social isolation
10/ Cultural Shock: cannot relate or adapt to social change and new tempo of life
11/ Poor to non-existent problem-solving and conflict resolution skills
12/ Engulfed in the prison value system: kindness is weakness
13/ Personal and cultural inferiority complex (“branded and banished“)
14/ Compulsive neurotic behavior: minimal stability (addictive mentality)
15/ Hunger for instant gratification: “All I want is EVERYTHING NOW”
17/ Poor self-esteem/hungry for approval (often actively resistant to disapproval)
18/ Compulsive drive to “catch up and catch back”: extreme impatience
19/ Confused and frustrated sexual roles, values and identities
20/ Emotionally and perceptually distorted view of self and others
21/ Limited employment related skills and out of touch with current market needs
22/ Frequently displaying self-destructive attitudes and actions (“bad attitude”)
23/ Forceful, aggressive responses to ego-threatening occurrences
24/ A fragile, vulnerable grip on life itself!

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>Multilevel shock, grief &amp; mental disarray!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 weeks</td>
<td>Lost in dense fog: numb, passive attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 weeks</td>
<td>Bouncing off the walls: high stress level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 months</td>
<td>Body out, mind in; very frustrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>Daily life on a runaway roller-coaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18 months</td>
<td>Just hanging on; sick of being out of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 months</td>
<td>Building a house of cards: a fragile construct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-30 months</td>
<td>Finally free, now what? What source of power?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-36 months</td>
<td>Hungry for progress, but fearful and uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-42 months</td>
<td>Three year itch: another major turning point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-48 months</td>
<td>Leap of faith...a fresh commitment to the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-54 months</td>
<td>Building &amp; focusing on the vision: faith essential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-60 months</td>
<td>Steady progress/taking control: apply discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 months forward</td>
<td>Begin shift from mere survival to quality of life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OF PRISONERS: BEST PRACTICES

Sister Suzanne Jabro, CSJ
Founder and Executive Director of the Center for Restorative Justice Works
October 29, 2010

Introducing the topic: Katelynn Dalton and Elke D’Haeyer
School of Theology and Ministry

1. Statistics & Challenges

   - US Demographics
     - 1.7 million children had a parent in prison or jail in 2007, an 82% increase since 1991.\(^1\)
     - 1/43 American Children
       - 1/15 Black Children
       - 1/42 Latino children
       - 1/111 White children\(^2\)
     - ½ of these children are under 10, average age is estimated at 8 years old\(^3\)

   - Challenges\(^4\)

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\(^2\) The Sentencing Project, p. 2
Daily life is affected: children’s living arrangements, changes in parent-child relationships, and changes in financial circumstances.

- Emotional and behavioral impact on children affected by incarceration:
  - Short term emotional impact: stress, sadness, fear, lower self-esteem, resulting in chronic sleeplessness, difficulties concentrating, depression, and anti-social behavior.
  - Long term reactions: reactive behaviors, coping patterns, higher risk of mental health problems, drug use, below-average academic performance or drop out of school, unemployment and possible delinquent behavior. One (UK) study showed that among boys who experienced parental incarceration before the age of ten, nearly half were convicted of a crime as adults.  

2. Recommendations

- In a recent study done by the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center suggests future work to focus on new research, changes in policy, and increased programs

“The growing number of children with an incarcerated parent represents one of the most significant collateral consequences of the record prison population in the U.S”

-The Sentencing Project, 2009

- Create Policies which:
  - Support parent/child relationships by providing programming that encourages good parenting as well as bonding with children. 54% of mothers and 57% of fathers in state prisons reported never receiving a visit from their children.  

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5 La Vigne, Nancy J., p. 7
6 The Sentencing Project, p. 10
7 The National Resource Center of Children and Families of the Incarcerated, p. 4

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Consider children’s needs during arrest and sentencing. Enhance reentry programming so to develop a means for incarcerated parents by which to reunite with their children. Revise ineffective legislation that focuses on a retributive system rather than rehabilitation and reconciliation within the whole community.

“We intended these children. It never seriously occurred to me that if my children had a living parent, that person shouldn’t be fully known to them.”

- Elizabeth Gaynes

Need for more programs

- There are programs but they are often limited by budgets. We need programs that focus on strengthening parent-children relationships, supporting caregivers, family members, and communities that are affected by parental incarceration.

- Some successful programs:
  - Abraham House, Bronx, NY (www.abrahamhouse.org)
  - Get on the Bus, Los Angeles, CA (www.getonthebus.us)
  - Hour Children, Long Island City, NY (www.hourchildren.org)
  - The Osborne Association, Queens, NY (www.osborneny.org)
  - Read To Me Mommy, Framingham, MA (initiated by Sister Maureen Clark, CSJ)

“Children with parents in prison need support and there are very few programs and social services specifically designed to serve their complicated and layered needs.”

- Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, 2008

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9 The Sentencing Project, p. 10

10 Bernstein, p. 94

11 La Vigne, Nancy J., p. 13

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Bibliography


_http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/wwwpewtrustsorg/Reports/sentencing_and_corrections/one_in_100.pdf._


CARE FOR THE CAREGIVERS TALKING POINTS.

Dr. Charles Swearingen, M.D.

Here follow some ideas relevant to Caring for the Caregivers:

A. Caregivers often neglect themselves, for various reasons. Typical reasons include the belief that they are invulnerable or that only the needs of the other truly matter. Sanctity versus pride, foolhardiness.

B. The concept of "Stress" has become so vast and broad that imprecision is rife in its usage, and its vagueness often leads to lack of specifics in remedying it.

C. Stress: 1. We can speak of "stressors" those events, situations, or IDEAS ABOUT THEM, which lead to dysphoric and/or disabling psycho-physiological states.

D. There are generally acknowledged stressors. The Holmes-Rahe list (death of a spouse, etc). Yet, each person has his/her own "list", own "buttons" which set off the stress response

E Stress is a response to something perceived/experienced. This leads to a specific psychophysiological state which, in general, is comprised of adrenergic dominance, the FIGHT OR FLIGHT state.

F. The Fight or Flight state or response is nature’s way of preparing the organism for defense; originally, one fought or fled the sabretooth tiger.

G. In this state, the foundational state of stress, the heart may speed, gut constrict, eyes focus, muscles tense. If only time limited, it is acute stress, which may or may not be harmful

H. But if the stressors persist, chronic stress may ensue. This is always harmful. The external stressors then may not abate, OR the internal memories of the stressors may induce the state (PTSD is the prime example)

I. In chronic stress, the "symptom list" broadens. It may include headaches, GI troubles, back pain, cardiac arrhythmias, constant anxiety, depression.

J. And, finally, BURNOUT. "Burnout" is the end state, seen when caregivers collapse, in which chronic unalleviated stress has supervened and the person can, to a great degree, no longer function.

K. People with high ideals who are very demanding of themselves, unforgiving, are at risk for chronic stress and burnout.

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L. In addition, numerous studies have shown a tight correlation between chronic unrelieved stress and cardiac disease. (The correlation with cancer is much less evidence based.)

M. Any remedy begins "within" ; i.e., the individual has to make a decision to opt for relief. This may prove hard for some people whose consciences are extremely unforgiving and who will define relief as failure.

N. Caregivers are not a special species. Like all creation, they, we, are children of God and have needs and vulnerabilities which must be attended to. It may take courage to admit one's limitations.

O. Ethical Principle?: career suicide by burnout is not a virtuous act. Any controversy about that?

P. There are two classes of remedies for stress and for the prevention/treatment of burnout. 1. Alloplastic: we change the environment, the stressful circumstances and 2. Autoplastic: We operate in some fashion upon ourselves while remaining in the same circumstances. These two are not diametrically opposed; there are nuances.

Q. For alloplastic change, tradeoffs will be incurred and advice/support/permission may be required from others. E.g., if one cuts back the hours of one's ministry, all of these will pertain, and a period of readjustment must be negotiated.

R. In autoplastic remedies we do something with/for our minds, bodies, spirits. The data on exercise is firm and positive. Prayer may help, but, of course, caregivers who are religious or ministers may already have tested the limits of prayer without concrete, specific relief. Meditation/Centering prayer is a very powerful tool. It induces the Relaxation Response, which is the diametrical opposite of the Fight/Flight response. Well studied by Benson et al.
Finding the "still point in the moving world" is a goal of all forms of meditation.

S. Other people may be hell (stressors) or heaven (suppliers of relief). Very important to discern who is who and which is which. Really empathic support, tailored to an individual's specific plight, can be a great relief from stress.
So, we hear much about 'support groups". But groups have very powerful dynamics and should eschew narratives and dialogs which can veer towards making people feel even worse. (Yes, this happens)

T. Psychotherapy and psychotropic medication may be of help in some instances. Caregivers need to know the symptoms of anxiety and depression and how they may show up in themselves.

U. Bottom Line: caring for caregivers, ourselves included, is no sign of failure. In fact, like getting an oil change for the auto, it is prudent, and is an investment in the possibility of long term survival in the caregiving role.
SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Articles:


Kunen, James S. "Teaching Prisoners a Lesson," The New Yorker, July 1995


Books:


www.stm-prisonministry.edu


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**Web Publications:**

Coming Home Directory: [www.cominghomedirectory.org](http://www.cominghomedirectory.org)

Criminally Unjust: Why America's prison policy needs repair; from America Magazine:
[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12311](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12311)


[www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml](http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/criminal.shtml)

Williams, G., *Spiritual Exercises with Prisoners – 18th Annotation Retreat*

Williams, G., *Theology of Prison Ministry*
[http://www.jpminc.org](http://www.jpminc.org)
Web Links
Abraham House: www.abrahamhouse.org
American Rehabilitation Ministries  www.arm.org
Bethany House Ministries  www.bethanyhouseministry.com
Center for Restorative Justice Works  www.crwj.org
Community Resources and Justice:  www.crjustice.org
Death Penalty:  www.clarkprosecutor.org
Exodus Transitional Community  www.etcny.org
Jesuit Restorative Justice Initiative:  www.jrji.org
Jesuit Prison Ministry, Inc.:  www.jpminc.org
  • www.jesuits.org
  • Concord Prison Outreach:  www.concordprisonoutreach.org/
  • Partakers:  www.partakers.org/
  • Human Kindness Foundation:  www.humankindness.org/
  • Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation:  www.mvfr.org/
  • Amnesty International:  www.amnesty.org/
  • Prison Chaplaincy Resources :
    o Magnificat: daily mass readings and prayers:  www.magnificat.com
    o Living Faith Foundation: daily Catholic devotionals, free to prison chaplains:  
      http://www.livingfaith.com/foundation.php
    o www.taize.fr
    o http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html
    o http://slu.edu/prayerbook/
Massachusetts Department of Corrections: 
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eopsagencylanding&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Public+Safety+Agencies&L2=M
assachusetts+Department+of+Correction&sid=xEops
Outreach Ministry:  www.prisonoutreachministry.org
Union of Correction Officers:  www.mcofu.org/
Vera Institute of Prison Justice:  www.vera.org

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