



UPAN Newsletter

Volume 3 Number 3 | MARCH 2016

"Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity"

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NEXT UPAN MEETING: MONDAY, APRIL 11, 2016 6:30-8:30 PM

Location: Holladay Library Meeting Room, 2150 E. Murray Holladay Road, SLC, UT

This will be a Family Meeting. We will share brief updates on legislation related to the criminal justice system and any developments regarding follow up on the Board Audit. Family members can share their concerns and feel free to talk in this meeting for sharing and support.

May UPAN Meeting: MONDAY MAY 9, 2016 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.

Location: Draper Library Meeting Room 1136 Pioneer Rd, Draper, UT

NEXT FOCUS MEETING: MONDAY, MAY 2, 2016 6-8 PM TOPIC: Meeting new administrators of UDC

Location: Adult Probation and Parole Office, 36 W. Fremont Avenue, Salt Lake City UT 84101

(FOCUS meetings are held every other month on the first Monday of the month)

SPECIAL NOTICE: Everyone attending future **FOCUS meetings**, needs to get there **ON TIME (BEFORE 6 PM)** . For the new meeting room. **We are escorted back to the meeting.** Thanks for your cooperation.

IN THIS ISSUE

Meeting Announcements, Disclaimer, meaningful quotations by Margaret Mead and Jimmy Carter Page 1

UPAN – March Meeting Summary Page 2

UPAN – Directors Picture with banner, plus Martin Luther King, Jr. quotation Page 3

Explaining Criminogenic Risk/Needs Assessments (Referred to in Performance Audit of Board) Pages 3 – 5

Summary of Chapter 3 of BOPP Performance Audit (Adopt More Proven Practices) Page 5 – 8

UPAN is now NON-PROFIT per IRS Page 8

FOCUS Meeting Summary Pages 8 – 10 Also UPAN contact info & list of UPAN official volunteers P. 10

Contact Info for: PrisonEd Foundation: Box 900693 Sandy, UT 84090 Email: prisonedfoundation@gmail.com

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***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*** Margaret Mead

**"Our dreams are big... our hopes high... our goals long-term... and the path is difficult.
But the only failure is not to try!"** former president Jimmy Carter

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**Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented.
This information is presented for the reader's enlightenment and evaluation.**

UPAN MEETING SUMMARY – Monday, March 14, 2016

By Warren Rosenbaum, Editor

Legislative Audit Subcommittee Presentation

The Legislative Audit subcommittee recently completed the first-ever performance audit of the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole (abbrev. BOP in this audit report). The auditors (Supervisor Kade Minchey and Auditor August Lehman), led by Audit Manager Mr. Darin Underwood, presented to UPAN meeting attendees, the same Power Point presentation the auditors made to the legislators when the final audit report was distributed to the legislature and the public on February 1, 2016.

The presentation summarized each of the five chapters of the Audit Report with several slides citing specific page numbers of the published report. Questions were allowed as the presentation progressed resulting in excellent interaction between the auditors and attendees, several of the latter asking for more details and seeking answers, often beyond the scope of the audit, indicating the high interest of this subject. The audit and the auditors were received with grateful comments, praises, and two or three rounds of applause at some conclusions they voiced.

Some Details On The Audit Findings

Audit conclusions such as: develop a strategic plan, track and monitor key data, measure performance (of the board), and improve transparency were cited and details of developing these audit findings were an integral part of the presentation. These audit findings are covered in the five-chapter audit report and UPAN President Molly Prince is currently writing a series of summaries of each chapter to be published in the UPAN Newsletter. This month's subject is Chapter 3, Adopt More Proven Practices (pgs. 5-8 of UPAN News). Chapter 4, Adopt an Electronic File Management System, is planned for the April UPAN News issue. Read further for May's planned subject.

With this series, UPAN hopes to expand the readership of the audit findings, especially to inmates who don't have access to the audit report, either in written form or via the Internet, where it is published in PDF format for reading, download, or printing. Go to the following link: http://le.utah.gov/audit/16_01rpt.pdf

One caution before printing: the file is 100 pages but only 53 pages are audit narrative. The remaining pages are either Left Blank Intentionally, Table of Contents, supplemental forms and support information, etc. Read it before hitting the print icon, then print only the pages you want, thus saving paper and printing costs.

Electronic File Management System Needed

The auditors stated that due to the BOP's antiquated paper records system, as opposed to a modern electronic file management system, many details for normal comparison and analysis were not available. The time and cost to hand-process thousands of paper records was beyond the available resources for this audit. An electronic file management system is recommended, however the auditors acknowledged the problem of acquiring such a system due to the limited Information Technology (IT) budget of the BOP. Details of this obstacle are cited on page 45 of the report.

Inefficient Board Rationale Sheet

Also of substantial interest to the auditors and especially the attendees is the grossly inefficient Board Rationale Sheet for the board's decisions. Improvements on this critical document are currently in process. Also, more communication to inmates of the reasoning behind the board's decisions and to inform inmates what corrective actions need to be done to find more favor with the board at the next parole hearing.

While the presentation included much more than this brief write-up can cover, one last thing of high interest and importance is contained in Chapter Five, namely a streamlined decision process for less serious offenders. Details of this subject are planned for the May issue of UPAN News.

SOTP In The Discussion

Mr. Underwood mentioned that one more subject of high interest and importance is a possible legislative performance audit of the SOTP (Sex Offender Treatment Program) at USP. He stated at least one influential legislator is looking into this subject. Families of loved ones having problems with the SO treatment program were encouraged to contact their Utah state representatives and senators and share their concerns about the current program and the challenges inmates face getting into it in a timely manner, among other things. If UPAN families contact their legislators with their concerns, it is possible the audit request for SOTP will be assigned to the Office of Legislative Audits sooner rather than later.

Also stated, in one year the auditors will follow up on the board's activities checking on compliance with this audit's recommendations. The meeting adjourned immediately after the presentation. The auditors received a standing ovation for their pioneering work.

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Food for Thought: 1) *"My past has not defined me, destroyed me, deterred me, or defeated me; it has only strengthened me."* - Steve Maraboli 2) *"By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection which is noblest; Second, by imitation which is easiest; and third by experience, which is bitterest."* – Confucius



Our lives begin to end the day we become silent on things that matter. Martin Luther King, Jr.

UPAN Directors, from left: Newsletter Editor Warren Rosenbaum; Vice-president Shauna Denos; UPAN President Molly Prince; Website design & electronic communications specialist Shane Severson; Not pictured: Secretary/Treasurer Heather Fabian.

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EXPLAINING CRIMINOGENIC RISK / NEEDS ASSESSMENTS REFERRED TO IN THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE BOARD By Molly Prince

The Jargon - Definition of Criminogenic

A system, situation, or place causing or likely to cause criminal behavior. Any factor that produces or contributes to the cause of crime or criminality.

What Are Criminogenic Risk Factors?

The following information is adapted from the article *Criminogenic Risk Assessments* by Jeanette Kinard and Jessica Johnson, published October 2, 2014 in Voice for the Defense Online, website address: www.voiceforthedefenseonline.com

Both internal and external factors contribute to criminal behavior and recidivism. These factors, known as risk factors, are split into two categories: dynamic and static. Static factors are those that cannot be changed, like gender, like criminal history, family criminality, age at first admission to a correctional facility, number of prior incarcerations, and the commitment offense. These are

related to crime and recidivism, however they cannot be changed through education, treatment, punishment, etc.

Dynamic risk factors are factors that can change or be changed through education or treatment. They may fluctuate over the course of one's life. Examples of dynamic factors can be where one lives, how one makes a living (environment); friends and associations; one's belief system, attitudes, and core values; substance use; process addictions such as gambling, pornography; inadequate social skills; and employment status.

Dynamic risk factors are also known as criminogenic risk factors or criminogenic needs. They are directly associated with the choice to commit crime. The term criminogenic takes into account that "Offenders have many needs deserving of treatment but not all of these needs are associated with their criminal behavior."

Criminogenic risk factors are those that can and should be identified and then addressed through the delivery of services. Various scholars, researchers, and other sources have compiled extensive lists of criminogenic risk factors, many of which overlap. According to Kinard and Johnson, the Texas Administrative Code lists “antisocial peers; antisocial beliefs, values, and attitudes; substance abuse, dependency, or addiction; anger or hostility; poor self-management skills; inadequate social skills; poor attitude toward work or school; and poor family dynamics.”

Of the overlapping factors, those repeatedly asserted to be the most closely related to recidivism are an antisocial personality pattern (marked by impulsiveness, aggression, stimulation seeking); pro-criminal attitudes/antisocial thinking processes (such as negative attitudes towards the law, values, thinking styles, and general attitudes supportive of crime); and social supports for crime (criminal friends, isolation from prosocial others). Other criminogenic risk factors also related to recidivism include substance abuse, employment instability and/or dissatisfaction, family problems, and a lack of involvement in prosocial leisure activities.”

Why Are Criminogenic Needs Important?

The Risk-Needs-Responsivity (RNR) model, provides a means to assess and treat offenders in order to reduce recidivism. The RNR model is made of three core principles: the risk principle, the needs principle, and the responsivity principle. All are based on criminogenic risk factors and needs.

The risk principle contends that “supervision and treatment levels should match the offender’s level of risk,” meaning that “low-risk offenders should receive less supervision and services, and higher-risk offenders should receive more intensive supervision and services.” It should be noted that research has also found that putting low risk offenders into more intensive supervision and services has the potential to backfire and cause them to become more high risk. So matching risk level to the level of supervision, intervention, and treatment is vital.

The needs principle states that the effective use of intervention services focuses on targeting an offender’s criminogenic needs. This principle acknowledges that although some static risk factors, such as criminal history, play a role in the likelihood of recidivism, they cannot be altered; therefore, those involved in sentencing decisions should target an offender’s criminogenic needs because they can potentially be altered through the delivery of services.

The responsivity principle is based on the idea that the key to reducing recidivism is targeting the offender’s criminogenic needs by placing them in cognitive-behavioral programs and other forms of treatment that

are the most likely to help the offender change thinking processes and behavior. To simplify, the idea is to place offenders in programs that address their criminogenic needs using strategies that have proven to be the most effective regardless of the type of offender. These should also include prosocial modeling (learning by example) while also focusing on the offender’s strengths, personality, motivation, learning ability and style, gender, race, and cultural characteristics.

Risk/Needs Assessments (RNA)

An RNA can be compared to a “uniform report card that measures offenders’ criminal risk factors and specific needs,” which if addressed and changed, will reduce the likelihood of involvement in future criminal activity. These assessments are most often questionnaires that are used by an interviewer (anyone from a correctional officer to a case manager, to a trained therapist, depending upon the specific assessment used). The questionnaire explores the offenders’ behaviors and attitudes that research shows are related to criminal reoffending. These instruments usually include questions about both static and dynamic risk factors.

Parole boards have begun using these assessments in a movement nationally to improve parole decisions. Supervising agencies (such as Adult Probation and Parole) use RNA to determine the level of supervision an offender needs, to determine the need for specialized treatment programs, and to develop an offender’s supervision plan. They are also used to help make decisions about sanctions and revocations when someone violates parole. These instruments also have a use within correctional institutions for programming and education.

According to Kinard and Johnson, there are over 60 different recidivism-related risk assessment instruments that are currently in use throughout the U.S. Some are specific to certain offenses, such as the risk of sex offender recidivism, or violating parole, 12 of these types of instruments are widely used and fairly well known. For example, the Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS) is one of the 12 most widely used RNA instruments nationally for general use.

Research over the past 20 years suggests that the use of RNA can significantly assist in reducing recidivism. Further, there are studies that found that in some cases, conditions of probation or parole that do not appropriately target the offender’s most critical dynamic risk factors are counter-productive and can waste time and resources on requiring both the parole officer and offender to participate in activities that are “unlikely to reduce risk and distract both from focusing on the critical risk factors that do affect the likelihood of recidivism.”

Proper use of RNA can be very beneficial in Utah’s paroling process as well as the supervision of probation

and parole. However, these risk assessments must be used appropriately and be applied in a culturally and gender sensitive manner.

One consideration that Utah needs to examine is that many of the assessment tools were originally developed for and tested on men. If these are applied to women, they could result in “over-classification of women offenders and sometimes a higher monitoring level for women than their behavior warrants.”

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 3 (Adopt More Proven Practices) A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLE

As reported in the February UPAN newsletter, the Audit Report on the Board of Pardons and Parole (BOP) is lengthy and detailed. This month we will summarize Chapter 3 of this document. Chapter 3 is entitled “BOP Should Adopt More Proven Practices.”

Since the board makes thousands of decisions each year that greatly affect the lives of inmates, their families, the community, and the entire criminal justice system, the auditors recommend that the board uses proven, evidence based processes in order to make these important decisions. The auditors found that currently, “these decisions are based primarily on board members’ and hearing officers’ ‘professional’ judgment and experience.”

UPAN, the general public, and most importantly, inmates, do not fully know where any of the board’s hearing officers (as opposed to board members) received their experience or how they developed their “professional judgment” as it pertains to making decisions about people’s futures as well as community safety. The board website: www.bop.utah.gov does not include biographies or backgrounds on the 11 hearing officers that review and preside over thousands of cases in hearings per year.

The auditors found that the research they did, as well as looking at what other states paroling authorities do, indicates that “professional judgment coupled with evidence-based practices, produce better outcomes and decisions that are more consistent.” As reported last month, the Auditors recommended that the board adopt three specific Best Practices that can enhance the consistency of decisions and improve outcomes, as well as additional practices:

- 1) Structured decision making (SDM)
- 2) A clear and direct rationale sheet
- 3) Adopt a set of ten proven practices recommended by the National Parole Resource Center.

Also, because many of the instruments were developed using small, homogenous sample sets, when applied to populations different from the original sample, the validity of the RNA is reduced. An example given by Kinard and Johnson states, “assessing risk on a population that is largely Native American and rural with a tool that was developed on a population of urban African Americans will not produce optimal results.”

Utah’s criminal justice system will need to be careful that they use appropriate assessments for all of our diverse populations.

What is SDM? Structured Decision Making is an evidence based, policy driven approach to decision making that uses established risk and needs factors to make quality release decisions. Paroling agencies that use SDM are better at setting goals and report better outcomes. The Audit surveyed 13 of the other states that use indeterminate sentencing structures like Utah, and they found 6 that use SDM. SDM will improve increased consistency in decisions, reduced recidivism, and enhanced public safety. SDM will move Utah’s board members away from the current approach of using personal philosophies that can weigh similar cases differently, thus resulting in significantly different decisions in cases that should have a similar decision.

Lack of Common Paroling Philosophy The audit report reads, “A number of inmate advocacy groups and inmates have expressed concern that parole decisions are not consistent, because from their viewpoints, similar crimes receive widely different sentence lengths. This is a common concern in states that use an indeterminate sentencing structure because it increases the potential for sentencing disparity.” While different sentencing lengths for similar crimes can be justified by aggravating factors in a case, the audit identifies that the current board does not have a common board paroling philosophy which could minimize the differences. According to The National Institute of Corrections’ Statement on Goals, as reported in the audit, it states, “*Where no overall organizational goal is articulated and the organization focuses on making single case decisions, individuals (board members) are free to insert their own personal perspectives into the many decisions that are routinely made. As a result, cases with similar circumstances may have widely different outcomes that may depend significantly on the person(s) making the decision in each case.*” Wow! UPAN families and our incarcerated loved ones know this all too well!!!

Possible Considerations for the Board in Determining its Guiding Philosophy

Those suggested by the Audit include:

- ♦ Set a threshold, such as sentencing guidelines, to determine when punishment has been met

- ◆ Determine the weight to place on risk and needs assessments in decision making
- ◆ Determine how to incorporate evidence-based practices in the board's decision making
- ◆ Determine how to best decide public safety risk and the level at which release from prison will be considered
- ◆ Determine how to weigh violent crimes against nonviolent crimes

Examples of philosophy could include how important the guiding philosophy should consider public safety, violent versus non-violent offenses, potential of recidivism (and define recidivism as re-offense versus technical violations). An example given was in Pennsylvania. Their board considers the minimum sentence (the bottom on an indeterminate sentence) as a "just" punishment and then looks at public safety when making a release consideration. Loosely translated, this would mean that once an offender has reached their bottom number, unless they have provided behavioral evidence while incarcerated that they would not be safe to be released, they would be eligible to parole.

Structured Decision Making is Recommended by National Organizations

The report states that The National Parole Resource Center, the Center for Effective Public Policy, and the National Institute of Corrections all recommend that state parole boards use SDM. The PEW Research Foundation recommends that states anchor their SDM in research based risk and needs assessment tools. In the Appendix of the Audit Report, examples of two very different tools are given. One is from Pennsylvania and the other from Ohio.

Benefits of using SDM

By using SDM, improved program placement decisions can be made. Parole conditions tailored to the individual offender's risk and needs can be identified. Matching an offender to specific treatment programs reduces recidivism, improves offender success, enhances public safety, and most efficiently uses public resources and taxpayer dollars.

Other benefits of SDM include: 1) fairness and consistency in parole decisions; 2) parole decisions are better substantiated and explained; 3) the parole board's liability for decisions decreases; 4) transparency of decisions increases; 5) training of new board members is more effective and efficient; 6) data for evaluating individual, system, and program decisions is provided. It is clear that the use of SDM will assist Utah in bringing the process and function of the board into the area of accountability that inmates, families, and advocacy groups have long pushed for.

Adopting a Structured Decision Making Process Includes Risk and Needs Assessments

While Utah currently uses some risk and needs assessments in their process, it is not consistent in their use in the decision making process. Risk assessment is used to help determine an offender's likelihood of reoffending. Needs assessment targets the offender's criminogenic needs and matches them to appropriate services and parole stipulations. According to the report, most states start their decision making process with the risk assessment, which then assures more consistency. The Audit states that the Utah BOP has now started to work on the development of SDM.

Another Area to Aid the Board in Decision Making is an Improved Rationale Sheet

The only information an inmate in Utah receives about how or why the board made its decision about his or her future is a rationale sheet that lists some aggravating and mitigating factors. Inmates and UPAN families have long expressed their disapproval and frustration over the rationale sheet that the board has used for years to justify the decisions the members have been making. In 2015, at a panel discussion with attorneys about the Board, Molly Prince asked a question about how the board can get away with not giving clear disclosure of where they got the information that resulted in check marks on these sheets. Cheryl Reber of the Utah Attorney General's Office replied that the rationale sheet is all that Utah law requires of the BOP.

According to the Audit Report, every individual at the board admitted that the rationale sheet doesn't capture all of the important factors used in weighing their decision. Further, "The PEW Charitable Trust, in coordination with the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ), conducted a correlation analysis and found no correlation or very little correlation between the rationale sheet's listed aggravating or mitigating factors and length of stay." The audit report supported this finding.

The report states, "Further, inmates, families, and advocates list the rationale sheet as one of their primary concerns because they find it confusing, vague, and unclear." Best practice in paroling authorities identify that communication with inmates is an important factor in the process. The Audit found that "other states' releasing authorities have more informative rationale sheets that focus on specific areas of improvement and/or risk to the community."

Current Rationale Sheet Doesn't Correlate to the Decision Made

In 2013 the Pew Charitable Trust research sampled over 200 case files at the Utah BOP and they found no correlation between the factors checked on the rationale sheet and an inmate's length of stay. Since the relevant data the board uses is contained only in paper files, PEW had to manually enter key data elements. PEW reviewed cases of nonviolent, second and third-degree drug and property offenders. PEW determined that Utah's parole board needs to improve

its rationale sheet. The auditor's review also supported PEW findings.

Utah's 2014 Sentencing Guidelines Require That Reasons Should Be Specified When Guidelines are not Followed

The audit reports that "the Sentencing Commission also stated that one mitigating factor could outweigh all the aggravating factors (and vice versa). Currently, no weights or scores have been given to the factors on the rationale sheet. This means that how the different factors are weighted could easily differ between one hearing officer or board member to another. The Audit further states, "The Sentencing Commission also said that factors should not be merely added up or otherwise mechanically applied in a balancing process." The auditors looked at individual factors and found no correlation between individual aggravating factors and length of stay above guidelines nor could they find correlation between mitigating factors and early releases. So basically, there is no evidence that the board is looking at aggravating factors to keep a person in prison longer, nor that they are looking at mitigating factors to release a person early.

UPAN finds this disturbing, because it proves that the rationale sheet is useless the way the board has been using it. It doesn't predict actual outcomes. The report states "with no apparent weighting scheme, this weighting significance is impossible to determine."

One of the rationale sheets UPAN received as part of our data gathering from inmates who were over matrix was entirely blank. Yet that individual remains in prison. We forwarded a copy of this to the auditors. They mention it in their report. It seems if a decision is made without checking any factors on a rationale sheet, there was no consideration given upon which to base their decision.

The audit continues, "The currently used rationale sheet does not provide an adequate explanation for board decisions to keep some inmates incarcerated beyond guideline length of stay." It notes that "the vague justification for the prison length of stay, especially when above guidelines, and the lack of guidance inmates receive for self-improvement can be counterproductive to good rehabilitation and good outcomes."

The Board's Administrative Rules Require that an Explanation of Reasons for the Parole Decisions Be Provided to Inmates

The following is taken verbatim from the Board Audit page 28. "Administrative Rule R671-305.1 states:

Decisions of the Board will be reached by, or ratified by, a majority vote and reduced to writing, including a brief rationale for the decision. The Board's written decisions and orders are public documents. Copies of the Board's decision shall be provided or

mailed to the offender who is the subject of that decision."

Even though the rationale sheet is intended to meet this rule, the current method is not adequate in its explanation regarding why the decision was made, including why they are being kept or released above or below guidelines. The report states, "This deficiency may be caused in part by the inconsistent methods used to fill out the form."

Even some officials at the BOPP acknowledge that the current rationale sheet is not completed with any consistency between reviewers. The report states, "One BOP hearing officer told us they are careful not to mark too many aggravating factors because the inmate could argue against them. Some board members and a hearing officer also told us that the rationale sheet does not provide a clear understanding of the justification behind the board's decision and the expectations for the inmate to improve."

The Audit Found Other States' Rationale Forms to be More Useful

The Report briefly discussed Pennsylvania's checklist which has a "reasonable 18 decisional factors that a hearing officer could check to justify approval or denial of parole. Utah's parole board has 33 aggravating factors and nearly as many mitigating factors." Further, Pennsylvania shares a list with the inmate of requirements he/she can fulfill by the next hearing to improve chances for parole. Utah doesn't provide that type of guidance other than to give a memo in some cases that requires some sort of treatment, such as substance abuse or sex offender treatment.

Ohio's paroling agency cites the grounds for denial of parole, which relate to risks to the community, and is based in SDM. Inmates in Utah generally have no idea of the specific reasons the board denied parole. The audit recommends a shorter list of decision factors that focus more on public safety and provides inmates with useful information.

Utah's Board Will Revise the Rationale Sheet

The report states that the BOPP has agreed that they need to improve the rationale sheet and are currently working on a revised version.

UPAN President's note: *While it is validating to learn that the audit found what inmates and families and advocates have been concerned about for years regarding this form, more changes should be incorporated. In addition to a revised rationale sheet, I would recommend the BOPP to go a step farther and give the evidence they are basing the ratings on the rational sheet upon. For example, if the board is recording that an inmate has no remorse, they need to cite in writing, the evidence of that conclusion based on impartial assessment, versus a hearing officer or board member's opinion based on an inmate not breaking*

down in tears during a hearing to show remorse. In every other professional's line of work that relates to an individual in the criminal justice system, we must give examples and evidence of how we came to our conclusions. This must be required of each and every board decision regarding each and every conclusion the board comes to. [All readers should insist on this! Ed.]

The report indicates that the Utah board is currently working on a new version of the form. *UPAN Note: The ACLU of Utah, Disability Law Center, and UPAN directors are being consulted in this process.*

Audit Recommends BOPP Implement Ten Practice Targets Recommended by the National Parole Resource Center

The National Parole Resource Center (NPRC) is a joint initiative between the Center for Effective Public Policy and the Association of Paroling Authorities International, in partnership with the US Department of Justice. NPRC has outlined ten practice targets that help parole boards use evidence based principles in their duties. These are:

1. Use good, empirically based actuarial tools to assess risk and criminogenic needs of offenders.
2. Develop and use clear, evidence-based, policy-driven decision making tools, policies, and guidelines that reflect the full range of a paroling authority's concerns.
3. Maintain meaningful partnerships with institutional corrections (prisons) and community supervision

- (A P & P) and others to encourage a seamless transition process and the availability of sound, evidence-based programs.
4. Use their influence and leverage to target institutional and community resources to mid- and high-risk offenders to address their criminogenic needs.
5. Consider for release at the earliest stage possible- in light of statutes and other sentencing interests – offenders assessed as low risk.
6. Use the parole interview/hearing/review process as an opportunity to – among other goals – enhance offender motivation to change.
7. Fashion condition-setting policy to minimize requirements on low risk offenders, and target conditions to criminogenic needs of medium- and high-risk offenders.
8. Develop policy-driven, evidence-informed responses to parole violations that incorporate considerations of risk, address criminogenic need and severity, assure even-handed treatment of violators, and use resources wisely.
9. Develop and strengthen case-level decision making skills/capacities in these areas.
10. Develop and strengthen agency-level policy making, strategic management and performance measurement skills/capabilities.

Next month we will review Chapter 4 of the Performance Audit regarding the needs for an electronic file management system at the BOPP.

UPAN HAS RECEIVED 501c3 NONPROFIT STATUS FROM THE IRS

We are pleased to announce that in February, UPAN received the determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service granting us status as a 501c3 organization. This means we are a non-profit organization and anyone who contributes to UPAN can deduct those contributions on their federal tax returns. This is retroactive to October 22, 2013, when UPAN was first incorporated.

We would like to publicly acknowledge and extend our sincere gratitude to attorney Melinda Morgan of Michael Best & Friedrich, LLC in Salt Lake City, Utah for her guidance and generous assistance in this process.

Ms. Morgan contacted Molly Prince at the beginning of December, 2015 after learning that UPAN was still seeking professional help in completing the application process to the IRS. She offered her time and expertise and the application was completed and submitted in January.

We also want to thank everyone who has contributed over the past two years to UPAN. The IRS requires a \$400 application fee along with the paperwork. Due to the generosity of UPAN families and contributions from inmates over the past year, we were able to pay for the application.

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FOCUS Meeting, Monday, March 7, 2016

by Warren Rosenbaum & Molly Prince

The Big Leap – Transition

This bi-monthly meeting covered transitioning from prison to parole. Under the administration of Mr. Rollin Cook, and through a lot of work and organization within UDC in this area over the last year, there are some programs now in place within the system to facilitate the

success of individuals when they transition out of prison and into our communities. This meeting included several speakers who are in charge of various aspects of the transitional services for the DOC. Transitional services are under the Division of Programming.

Transition Agents

Supervisor of Transition Agents Ross Williams explained this department has a total of 8 transition agents for the state. All are seasoned correctional agents. The process of helping inmates prepare to parole is now being centralized and standardized so it is the same throughout the state. Transition agents help set up treatment as needed, help apply for VA benefits, and help the inmate get Social Security applications started three months before release. Some agents work fulltime helping parolees prepare to find employment, thus supporting them to rebuild their lives as much as possible. As a foundational step toward success, transition agents assist the inmate in identifying important issues such as residence or potential employment. Then the local A P & P agents physically inspect the living arrangements intended for the parolee, noting if the residence complies with the requirements for the specific parolee.

Transition information includes identifying the specific needs the inmate has as he/she moves to parole. Inmates are identified approximately 3 to 4 months prior to release to begin receiving transition services. It should be noted that these services are provided for inmates who are going to parole. Individuals who will be terminating or expiring their sentence will only receive some information. It is recommended that inmates in this category contact their case managers and request information they will need upon release and request to meet with a transition specialist.

Transition Mentoring Program

Correctional Specialists David Burton and Dennis Tucker represented the Transition Mentoring Program. This program has been in place for 1½ years for female inmates. Lt. Jennifer Stansfield also shared information about this program.

A pilot phase has recently been implemented in Promontory at Draper for male inmates.

As part of entry into the mentoring program, correctional specialists (aka case managers) assess the inmate for criminogenic needs including anti-social behavior, attitude, serious personality flaws, their peers (with whom they'll associate when released), impulsive behavior, and lack of empathy for others.

There are several screening criteria for inmates to qualify for this program. One is that the individual must have a high enough classification level to attend evening classes for the program. Those who qualify for this program are matched with mentor volunteers who accept a 15 to 18-month commitment to mentor an inmate. The mentor helps to identify the needs the inmate has to help prepare them to release and to help them become successful on parole.

Individuals who become mentors must pass a background check and cannot be current visitors at a

UDC prison. Mentors come from all backgrounds, religions and different cultures. They first attend an orientation meeting to discuss the expectations and then the potential mentor can choose if they want to continue with the training. They attend 6 hours of training as well as monthly "spot training" to exchange experiences and ideas. They also have quarterly training toward annual training requirements to remain mentors. Mentor safety is first priority.

There are serious efforts to match the inmate to a compatible mentor three to six months before the inmate is released. Mentors have weekly visits with the inmate in which they create a transition plan and goals for successful release. They also incorporate resources into the inmate's release and plan for parole success. This allows the mentor and inmate to develop a favorable and supportive relationship prior to release. This program includes both parolees and those who terminate or expire their sentences.

The mentor continues to meet with the parolee weekly for up to a year after release from prison. So far, 10 women have successfully completed the program. There are currently 43 women in the program. In the 1½ years the women's program has been running, they have seen only 10% recidivism (one out of the 10 who completed). Time will allow for gathering of outcome data, but this appears to be a logical and beneficial program. UPAN hopes it can be duplicated for every housing area of both prisons.

A cultural change in mindset is needed, both in the community, and in the prison system. This involves seeing inmates as human beings that need and deserve mentorship, rather than being the scum of society. This change in society's attitude will take concerted efforts over at least a ten-year period. Nevertheless, mentors are out there who are willing to help, so a serious recruiting effort is constantly underway to engage mentors for both the male and female offenders for this remarkable new direction in Utah's corrections and rehabilitation.

The Life Program

A two-man team from the LIFE program at CUCF were energetic advocates of the new direction Corrections is pursuing. Forrest McNeal and Billy (sorry we don't have his last name) facilitate a series of classes to prepare inmates for success in transition from prison to the community. LIFE stands for: Living Institution Free Everyday. Their slogan is "It doesn't matter who you were and what you did, it matters who you are and what you're doing." UPAN likes this slogan!

The program they are pioneering is a 6-month, 3-phase plan. They begin working with inmates 10-12 months before release. In their words, it is "a positive atmosphere within a very negative environment."

One could not find more enthusiastic people engaged in a program of human rehabilitation. Leaders they are. The LIFE program they are leading is 192 hours in the program with 1,800 pages of curriculum, purchased from Phoenix Curriculum "New Life." It is written at a 6th to 8th grade reading level to be able to reach as many individuals as possible. The students keep their books upon release, and evidence based statistics show a low 7.6% recidivism rate for those who complete the course.

We learned that the LIFE Program was started in January 2016 for female inmates in Draper. FOCUS Meeting attendees were very pleased to learn of this program and hope to learn that it will be extended both within CUCF as well as to all housing units at the Draper facility.

The Family Psychology Program

On the family side, Lt. Jennifer Stansfield of programming and licensed mental health counselors Karen Pace and Tamera Pederson of Clinical Consultants in Ogden, presented a family reunification and support program that was originally designed to help women inmates.

The Family Psychology Program is a therapeutic and educational program for parents who are incarcerated at USP as well as for their children and family members. It promotes the practical application of healthy family relationship skills. These skills include: self-control, boundaries, emotional regulation, stress management, assertive communication, conflict resolution, building trust, and constructive parenting and co-parenting. It also focuses on building a network of social support resources and adjustment to the community once paroled to the community. Clinical Consultants is the agency that contracts with the Department of Corrections to facilitate this program both in prison and upon parole.

Parents who are incarcerated must meet minimum eligibility requirements that include having a parole date less than 36 months away, a security classification that permits out of housing movement after 5 p.m., and approval under the UDC child/family visitation requirements. Parents who are inmates also need to successfully complete the UDC Parenting Skills Class.

Once the above criteria are met, the inmate is placed in a therapy / educational group to work on understanding

family dynamics, improve parenting and relationship skills, and to process their concerns as they prepare to begin reunification and reintegration into their children's lives.

The inmate has a family member or other person (approved as a visitor) who brings the inmate's children to the program to visit, participate in various activities, and work on strengthening the relationship between parent and child. The inmate learns how to co-parent and support and be supported by the other parent or caregiver of the children. These activities are facilitated by the therapists and are supervised by correctional officers.

Upon release, the inmate undergoes at least three therapy sessions with Clinical Consultants in either Ogden or Salt Lake City to assist in the transitional phase and support the parolee in successful integration into the community. Two of these sessions are free to the paroled person.

There are 10 incarcerated parents in the program at any given time.

A Family Psychology Program for fathers who are incarcerated just started this year in the Promontory facility in Draper.

According to information provided in this meeting, incarcerated parents may request to participate in this program by sending their request via institutional mail to Lt. Stansfield in UDC Division of Programming. UDC staff may refer inmates by contacting Lt. Stansfield or contacting the therapists directly.

Appreciation for the meeting and new programs

March's FOCUS meeting was a very informative session. UPAN attendees expressed their appreciation to the presenters with applause and personal contacts at the end for their efforts toward successful transitions of inmates from prison to parole or successful launching of expired-sentence former inmates. Parole success has been an interest of many UPAN families and we are pleased that these programs have been developed and implemented to pursue this goal.

Lastly, many thanks to the new FOCUS facilitator, Brooke Adams, for her efforts in coordinating this excellent meeting and for obtaining a larger room to accommodate the attendees. You do good work!

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