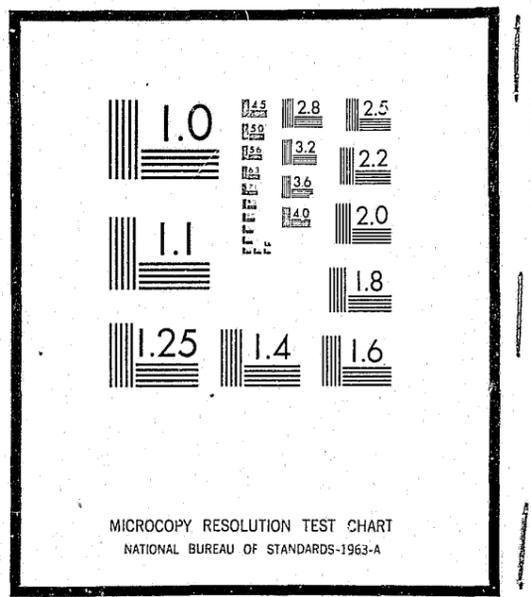


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Date filmed



WEST TEXAS REGIONAL ADULT PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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September 17, 1976

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County Court at Law No. 1
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County Court at Law No. 3
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Hudspeth County Court

National Criminal Justice Reference Service
U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Law Enforcement
and Criminal Justice
Washington, D.C. 20531

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed is a paper I recently completed which I believe has merit in regard to developing more realistic methods of supervising both probationers and parolees.

For the past year and one half, our department has been involved in a pilot study with the National Institute of Corrections. The study is called Community Resource Management. This paper evolves around some of the philosophies expounded in the C.R.M.T. project.

I seriously believe it has merit and would hope you would be able to assist me in this dissemination. I would not be averse to further editions if deemed necessary.

Thank you for your interest in matters of mutual concern.

Sincerely,

Joseph P. Misgione
JOSEPH P. MISGIONE
Deputy Director

JPM:ss
Enclosure

36599

"BROKERAGE" —

(A Realistic Approach to Probation Supervision)

By

NCJRS

Joseph P. Miscione
Deputy Director
West Texas Regional
Adult Probation Department

SEP 22 1976

ACQUISITION

Since the probation concept was devised and implemented, the main impetus has been directed to transforming criminals into non-criminals, using probation supervision as the guiding hand in the correctional process.

Naturally, this transformation is attempted in order to protect society from further criminal activities on the part of the probationer. Reintegration of the probationer into productive living standards is, thereby, the end goal of probation supervision activity.

At present, there are sincere questions regarding the effectiveness of this concept as well as the effectiveness of other community agencies in their quest to attain their reintegrative goals. On the other hand, it has been proven that probation and other community programs for the offender are at least as effective as institutionalization, and at the same time, less costly and, perhaps, less damaging to the offender and other significant family members.

Probation and parole agencies are currently reaching a critical period as social problems have become so unwieldy in our complex urban society. More effective correctional measures must be implemented.

36599

Good intentions and philosophical lip service can no longer stem the tide of mounting pressure put upon the criminal justice system. No amount of money poured into probation and parole will improve traditional practices nor will it have any dramatic effect on an improved system, since the very fibers of probation and parole demand significant renovation. Probation and parole must replace existing practices and philosophies with innovative realistic planning that does not involve excessive cost implementation.

Correctional casework is and has been the main tool of probation and parole agencies. Supposedly, it is a specialized form of counseling directed at the criminal offender. This casework or counseling, though somewhat unquantifiable, has remained the basic rehabilitative device in the correctional change process. At this time, there is ample evidence to show that the traditional one-to-one casework model is largely ineffective and in fact not the direction we should continue to follow.

Dennis C. Sullivan, NCCD Assistant Project Director, states that "Even if it were operationally possible to maintain a casework orientation model in probation, it is debatable whether such an approach is desirable for the majority of probationers." He goes on to say that, "It seems that within the concept of client reintegration the focus of concern of staff members may not be so much the nature of their own relationship with probationers as with the probationers' relationships with groups within their community."¹ Logic will bear out that unless successful client community integration takes place for the probationer, probation supervision becomes meaningless the day on which the client is terminated from supervision.

Joel Fischer, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Hawaii, goes even further when he says that, "Controlled research suggests that at present, lack of evidence of effectiveness of professional casework is the rule rather than the exception."²

Victor Raimy defines casework as a set of undefined techniques, applied to un-specific problems with unpredictable outcome.³

Fischer's statement along with Reimy's definition of casework hint strongly to the fact that the outcome of casework techniques will always remain speculative in nature and that perhaps it is the very abstractness of the technique that has placed the credibility of probation and parole below acceptable levels.

A great deal of evidence indicates that the largest proportion of offenders do not, in fact, need casework counseling or that they are in the long run better off for having it. Casework has been found to be overly time consuming and seldom implemented adequately. It has been provided to clients in a very matter-of-fact way, with little question as to whether it is needed or not. The fact is that in reality what most offenders need are basic community services. Probation and parole officers have believed their role is that of a therapist or treatment agent; the implication being that the clients they see are usually ill. In term, the word "ill" is medical in nature and overlooks the more significant cause and effect relationship existing in the communes of criminal behavior; those being: unemployment, poor housing, poor health conditions, lack of education and other negative societal influences. Because of these more realistic cause and effect factors, probation officers and parole officers must begin to rely less on strict casework techniques as well as on the therapeutic milieu between their clients and themselves. Less emphasis must be placed on modification techniques and on spending long hours at attempting to talk their clients back into the mainstream of society.

Claude T. Mangrum, Director of Adult Services, in San Bernadino, California, suggests in a recent article entitled "Corrections' Tarnished Halo" that:

"Over the years, so much of correctional "counseling" has been nothing more than just talking to people about their problems in informal or browbeating ways. Problems facing the offender--such as lack of employment; housing, food, clothing, or other basic necessities; transportation; social and legal rejection because of status; conflicts in social relationships; lack of skill to cope with his environment; or a long history of failure, especially in relation to the authority structures of society--cannot be solved by talk; they require action on a limited and practical level designed to provide concrete and immediate relief, at least of those problems which are most pressing. This is the sort of thing the offender needs now, can understand and work toward. It is also the kind of goal attainment which has immediate impact in his life and can provide the types of experiences which convince him that he is important, is capable of doing for himself and can live a lawful and productive life. If the correctional worker can help the offender resolve some of his more pressing practical problems, we would undoubtedly be surprised at how some symptoms of 'personality disturbance' quickly vanish."⁴

While there is little doubt that the offender's past employment, education and social deficiencies have strong bearing on the crime he commits, most of the correctional effort is placed on guidance and counseling techniques aimed at symptomatic analysis instead of developing a system by which the offender can meet his basic needs which are germane to all people.

Probation staff speak constantly of their relationships with their probationers as an end in itself and think of themselves too often as the sole means of providing a total rehabilitative package to those they supervise. Further,

when assigned a number of cases, it is usually implied that the probation officer has full responsibility for all of the problems brought to him by his clients. Worst of all, the probation officer is frequently so naive as to believe he can actually handle this challenge. Realistically, no one person can have all the skills necessary to deal with the multifaceted needs of people, especially when ever increasing caseload demands are heaped upon the officer. Reducing caseload sizes may have some effect, but, again, California studies show that this does not significantly enhance the rehabilitative effort.

Therefore, the responsibilities given the probation officer as sole rehabilitation agent must be replaced or at least investigated. The realistic stance of a probation officer must be that of a broker. First, he identifies needs and attempts to secure services from those community agencies best able to provide them. This concept is no less than threatening to the longstanding correctional casework advocate, since, in essence, we who are in the field must give up a little. We must admit that ver-
bage such as casework, counseling, or whatever, cannot in itself meet the complex needs of the people we supervise, and most assuredly, not guarantee even minimally the long range client rehabilitative effort. On the other hand, with the establishment of a new service delivery system, the probation officer will be less frustrated, yet more productive since clients will receive services that are concrete and goal oriented, rather than somewhat intangible, as is the case in a strictly one-to-one counseling relationship. The new role, unlike the traditional role, must aim its energies at assuring that the vital community services are readily available to the probationers being supervised. This must be the primary goal in addressing any attempt at improving client attitudinal change and a return to productive living.

It is my experience that change only comes about when the probationer finds some good reason to change. Unless there is an investment in change, it is fruitless to suppose it will happen. Therefore, it is somewhat impractical for us in the probation field to expect spontaneous introspection of so-called normative values, when the client's payoff is sorely missing. This payoff must be measurable against societal standards and unfortunately or fortunately, as the case may be, must be defined basically in terms of economics and personal prestige. Without either of these societal symbols, the chance for client success is negligible. Even more unfortunate, although true, is that prestige, respect, self-worth, and other favorable attributes most often come about after some sense of economic stability is obtained. This is not to say that all economically deprived persons are prone to criminal activities, but that, interestingly enough, most convicted offenders are in fact economically deprived. A correlation between economics and criminal activities can be easily established by a simple non-experimental look at the average income of the typical offender prior to being incarcerated in state prisons throughout the country. I must ask my readers to excuse this economic tangent on which I have embarked, but the fact is that economics are totally relevant to a client's success or failure. Yet, traditional casework leaves little hope for meeting even the most basic need for satisfactory employment. In short, one probation officer cannot insure that his caseload needs, even in this one area of employment, can be met and even if every client on his caseload is employed, chances are the largest proportion of these individuals will be earning wages that are completely incompatible with maintaining even a marginal living standard. Consequently, the need for probation staff specialization and the brokerage concept may now become more apparent. Since it is quite obvious that the probation officer cannot insure comprehensive rehabilitation for many clients assigned to him, probation departments must begin to plan ways of insuring the smooth delivery of the many community services needed for the clients being served.

Further, it must be assured that these services will be provided not in a token, half-hearted manner, but in a way that is totally commensurate with client needs. This new service delivery must place the probation officer and his agency in a new role, functioning not as a sole rehabilitative agency, but as a broker, or a manager of rehabilitative services. Such a plan was designed by the National Institute of Corrections and is presently being implemented by various probation departments in the western half of the United States under the guidance of the Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education. The new system is called C.R.M.T. or the Community Resource Management Team.

Instead of the individual one-to-one counseling approach, a scheme which stresses "services" for the offender is proposed. Those services in the community must be linked to the offender. Too often available services are not used for the simplest of reasons: neither the offender nor the officer knows of their availability. The Community Resource Management Team will insure linkage of services where available, and where not available will move towards their development.

Following is a list of elements basic to the C.R.M.T. concept:

1. To serve caseload needs which reflect the offender's needs for housing, schooling, and so on.
2. A team approach which treats the community rather than the individual. Members of a Probation Community Resource Management Team along with representatives from a multitude of community agencies functioning as a group sharing special and general knowledge and skills to insure the linkage of services or instigating their development where not available.

Depending on probation department size, each officer would be assigned one or more rehabilitative areas of concentration (employment, alcohol, drugs, vocational training, etc.) The officer in turn develops the community agency or agencies servicing those

rehabilitative areas to which he is assigned. The probation department's Community Resource Management Team is therefore, made up of each probation officer staff member along with the various community agencies which can deliver a multitude of varied client services. It should be noted that upon the department's total caseload needs assessment, it may be determined that a particular need such as employment ranks high. In this case, additional officers can be assigned to the employment team. Volunteers can also be used effectively as viable team members.

Community Resource Management departs substantially from traditional probation practices in that clients are not randomly assigned, although one officer is given overall supervision responsibility, the client may work with several officers depending on his/her particular needs. These needs should be assessed prior to the time probation is granted so that the client can be immediately linked to the service most vital to his/her success in probation and in the community.

TOWARD HELPING CLIENTS ATTAIN REALISTIC, TANGIBLE NEEDS

Though the C.R.M.T. concept presents a substantial departure from standard probation organizational framework and requires greater explanation than can be covered in this paper, its basis assumptions are germane to a new, more realistic probation officer role. Admittedly, the concept of the probation officer using a multitude of social service agencies is not new. Nonetheless, insuring linkage of needed services to probation clients with available community services is more often than not seriously missing. Martin Rein, in his paper entitled "The Social Services Crisis", states:

"What often happens with clients is that they frequently become involved with too many social service agencies, each with different values, goals, and systems of classification. If a client's problem gets settled at all, it is often in line with the relative powers of the agency rather than according to what the recipient really needs."⁵

Rein further criticizes the social service system by stating that the local service network functions as an autonomous unit and acts according to its own interpretations of what its mission is. Each agency has different aims and different approaches. Coordination is poor and accountability almost totally absent. Yet these agencies hold within them services that are most vital to the offender's longrange rehabilitative success. Insuring that these services are available and deliverable to the probationer is the brokerage role that must be assumed by the probation officer. Traditional casework, though firmly entrenched in our correctional system, must be replaced with a concept that demands accountability. A concept that replaces abstract supposition with concrete attainable treatment goals.

CONCLUSION

In terms of probation and parole supervision, we in the field have developed a treatment milieu that is heavily casework oriented. This orientation has generally placed the probation or parole officer as the sole change agent in all rehabilitative functions. New philosophies based on ample scientific evidence indicate that new concepts must be developed which temper this traditional casework role. The replacement of overly time-consuming casework techniques, which often do not lead to the attainment of tangible client goal realization, must be redirected toward a new approach which centers on the role of the probation or parole officer as a broker or manager of community services, rather than the sole rehabilitative agent. Furthermore, the development and coordination of social agencies by the probation officer in order to expedite and improve client service delivery must be included as a primary role in the task of probation or parole supervision.

These new approaches discussed in this paper presuppose that social problems are caused by inadequate social arrangements that systematically victimize large segments of the population and frequently precipitate criminal acts. This new model is directed toward changes in the client's environmental structure that aim at tangible goal attainment. They are not solely to modify a client's behavior through psychological principles, but to provide services that are directly related to basic client needs attainment. Only when these needs are met will the chances for long-range stability and lower recidivist rates be more satisfactorily realized.

FOOTNOTE PAGE

1. Sullivan, Dennis, "Team Management in Probation", (NGCD, 1972) Page 5
2. Fischer, Joel, "Is Casework Effective?", a Review, January, 1973, Page 2
3. Ibid, Page 2
4. Mangrum, Claude, "Corrections' Tarnished Halo", Federal Probation Magazine, March, 1976, Page 1
5. Rein, Martin, "The Social Service Crisis", Page 3

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2. Fischer, Joel; "Is Casework Effective?", a Review, January, 1973, Page 2.
3. Goldberg, Gabe; "Structural Approval to a New Model."
4. Mangrum, Claude; "Corrections' Tarnished Halo", Federal Probation Magazine, March, 1976, Page 1.
5. Rein, Martin; "The Social Service Crisis", Page 3.
6. Sullivan, Dennis; "Team Management in Probation", (NCGD, 1972) Page 5.
7. "Community Resource Management Team for Adult Offenders", Unpublished Report, June, 1975.

END

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