



ISSUES IN COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper provides an overview of key issues facing community corrections in Tasmania, Australia and internationally. The paper draws upon a wide range of documents and discussions in order to identify what field practitioners and academic researchers consider to be the main challenges and opportunities for community corrections as the 21st century unfolds.

The intention of the paper is to stimulate further thinking about the nature of correctional practices - from the point of view of philosophical rationale (what we want and what we ought to be doing) and practical efficacy (how we can best implement preferred aims and objectives at the concrete level of policy and program development). The paper is not about answers to problems, or solutions to dilemmas. Rather, the concern is to place on the table questions that underpin community corrections interventions generally, and to illustrate varying responses to these questions.

Issues

Community corrections systems have changed and evolved enormously since their genesis in early probation schemes. One purpose of this paper is to discuss the key issues that now dominate policy-makers and practitioners worldwide as they assess what has gone before them and what lies ahead. Such an exercise can assist in guiding us through the myriad ideas and practices that today are the hallmark of any human service. To evaluate what it is we do, we need to ask the right questions. Some of these include:

- what are we trying to do in community corrections?
- who is going to deliver the service and how?
- how are offenders to be dealt with in the context of service provision?
- how well can we deliver the service?
- what factors influence how we carry out our tasks?

- how do we know we are doing what we say we are doing?
- what is the future of community corrections?

The answers to these questions will and do vary greatly depending upon the jurisdiction and the individuals involved. Nevertheless, there are broad trends and patterns that indicate similar thinking and similar operational choices on the part of community corrections staff and managers across the Western world.

Responses

How specific organisations respond to the key issues of community corrections varies considerably. Different services have different missions, and different systems have very different organisational structures. Moreover, regardless of broad systemic philosophy and practice orientation, correctional work at a practical level inevitably consists of highly variable and complex activities that cannot be summarised or predicted in abstract system models. Nevertheless, it is important to ascertain the broad directions and alternatives in service provision.

This paper provides an account of diverse approaches within the corrections field by at times emphasising differences at a very general level. In other words, we can construct an 'ideal type' that captures to some extent the main features of any system or any particular approach. This 'ideal type' presents a one-sided and exaggerated view of a service so that comparison is made easier.

The other dimension of the discussions to follow is that of appreciating the consequences that flow from adoption of any particular model or approach in the community corrections field. How problems are conceptualised, and how practices are organised, have major ramifications for service delivery and offender management. Fundamental to the overall community corrections agenda is the matter of philosophy.

Rationale & Values

Key Issue: What are we trying to do?

The mission of community corrections is informed by how punishment is viewed and what the intended outcomes of intervention are meant to be (see Worrall, 1997). In general, punishment tends to be linked to two broad orientations. One idea is that punishment is primarily about retribution - it is about giving people what they deserve for the harms they have caused. We look backward in order to offer a punishment that is proportional to the harm committed. Another perspective emphasises the consequences of punishment. From a utilitarian point of view, any punishment that is meted out must not make things worse but must help to rectify the situation. Punishment is thus highly conscious of the future, and is intended to prevent or deter re-offending from taking place. For community corrections, these perspectives translate into very specific kinds of philosophies or rationales, that, in turn, have major implications for how community corrections services will carry out their tasks.

Philosophies of Community Corrections

The main philosophies of community corrections include:

- *community incapacitation* - this involves intensive monitoring and supervision of offenders in community settings. The aim of community corrections is to keep offenders under close surveillance and to thereby deter them from re-offending. The emphasis is on control and management of offenders.
- *rehabilitation* - this involves efforts to change or modify the offender's behaviour by engaging them in some type of therapeutic or skills-based program. The aim of community corrections is to prevent recidivism through behaviour modification. The emphasis is on personal development and enhanced capabilities.
- *restorative justice* - this involves attempts to have the offender participate in activities intended to repair the harm to victims and to the wider community. The aim of community corrections is to restore harmony through the offender doing something for and by themselves to make things better in the community. The emphasis is on improving the well-being of offender, victim and community.

In New Zealand, there is a strong rehabilitative aspect at both the front end and back end of the correctional system. This has featured strong social and therapeutic elements, such as provision of vocational training and drug and alcohol treatment programs. (Brown, 1996:436).

In practice, the explicit service rationale for any particular community corrections system generally incorporates elements that include such things as the importance of community safety, individual treatment and offender restitution. Different demands on community corrections, reflecting quite different philosophical orientations, can however create major tensions within a service. The defining philosophical foundation of a service therefore needs to be clarified and given practical expression if uncertainty, ambiguity and conflict over purposes is to be avoided.

Community Safety or Restorative Justice

Much of what occurs with in community corrections is influenced by the general political climate. It has been argued that in recent years in many Western jurisdictions the prevailing climate is one based upon a 'culture of severity', with a strong emphasis on punitive law and order politics (Hughes et.al., 1998). This can affect the operation of community corrections in at least two different ways. First, the response of service providers may be to stress 'public safety' and rigorous control of offenders over all other objectives. Secondly, service providers may continue to emphasise restitution, rehabilitation and repairing of harm, but do so through the adoption of more intensive modes of work.

The nature and degree of intervention on the part of community corrections will manifest as intrusive, coercive measures designed to control offender behaviour, or as supportive, participatory measures

intended to change offender behaviour in positive ways as well as improving community relationships.

Program structure and integration

Mixed purposes can lead to a skewing of service provision in either surveillance and control, or an intensive support direction. Meanwhile the manner in which an offender is treated within corrective

In the USA, supervision of offenders within the community has become a major public safety issue, with responses ranging from, 'steering' offenders to 'socialising institutions' to the development of supervision strategies that 'control and contain' the offender (Rhine & Paparozzi, 1999:49).

services may vary dramatically from one point to another. A crucial issue here is how to provide a seamless service across institutional settings (in prison, in the community), that best reflects the overarching philosophy of the corrective service.

The Prison and Probation Services in England and Wales use a combined prison and probation system that includes:

- *effective risk management*
- *targeting offender behaviour*
- *addressing the specific factors linked with offenders' offending*
- *relevance to offenders' learning style*
- *promoting community reintegration*
- *maintaining quality and integrity of service*

(Joint Prison/Probation Accreditation Panel, 2000:3).

Service Delivery

Key Issue: Who is going to deliver the service and how?

Service delivery is about the translation of mission statements and institutional philosophy into concrete operational practices. It is the practical expression of what it is we are trying to achieve. The focus of attention in corrective services is the offender. Depending upon agency rationale, service delivery will be directed in varying ways at changing offender behaviour or at the least preventing them from re-offending in the short term. In recent years, there has emerged several different concepts relating to service delivery, each of which revolves around some form of offender management. If any of these approaches are to be adopted then correctional services staff will need to fully understand the basic features of each model, and be trained in the requisite skills that each demands.

Integrated Offender Management

The most prevalent way in which to describe service delivery in corrections today is that of 'integrated offender management'. This refers to an attempt to provide a seamless system of intervention that covers prison inmates and post-

What is integrated offender management?

Integrated Offender Management is a structured approach to offender management, which relies heavily on the use of standard tools to assess and manage the needs of offenders. This enables the criminal justice system to use consistent induction, assessment and offender (sentence planning and management) processes, and to offer a range of effective and targeted interventions (Mellor, 2002:3).

release offenders throughout the total course of their sentence. It also includes those who have been sentenced to community based orders as well as those who have been incarcerated. The status of the offender, therefore, does not change

What is Sentence Planning?

Sentence Planning is a guide for all interactions with the offender. The sentence plan is developed from the information based on the assessment processes. In essence, the higher the assessed risk of serious re-offending the, the more intensively the offender is managed (Mallor, 2002:4).

the overall orientation of the intervention strategy.

The crux of integrated offenders management is that each offender ought to be treated on the basis of 'throughcare' principles. These principles include the idea that there be a consistent system of assessment of the offender, program allocation in relation to each individual offender, evaluation of program impacts, and smooth transition back into the community life. Integrated offender management thus describes the total intervention process. Within this framework, a sentence plan may be devised that basically describes the treatment, educational or vocational options available to an offender once needs and risks have been rigorously assessed. Case management describes the process of implementation of the sentence plan, and includes ongoing evaluation and review.

The key issues surrounding integrated offender management include clear-cut policy guidelines regarding agency operating philosophy, staff training and development with respect to understanding concepts and skills associated with this type of intervention system, resources required to adequately ensure risks and needs of offenders are actually addressed at a program level, and assessment procedures that confirm that the program is doing what it says it is meant to do.

From the point of view of community corrections as such, another issue relates to the precise role community agencies in the integrated management scheme. This is a matter of coordination, evaluation and financial management Organisational

systems will need to be put into place if the individual idiosyncrasies

of practitioners are to be reduced to a minimum, and divergent philosophies of community agencies held in check.

What is the process of case management?

1. Assessment:

- identify needs and risks

2. Supervision Plan

- identify specific objectives to meet needs
- identify methods of each objective
- refer for assessment of suitability

3. Pre-program work

- preparation, motivation

4. During program

- support program work
- deal with other issues
- receive interim progress reports

5. After program

- receive program completion report
- follow-up work (maintenance, relapse prevention)

6. Periodic review

- review needs
- revise objectives if necessary
- alter methods if necessary

7. Final assessment

- review needs and risks
- seek offender feedback on supervision
- assess impact of supervision

Source: Merrington, S., Hine, J., 2001, A

Offender Services

Key Issue: how are offenders to be dealt with within the context of service provision?

Being provided with information about a particular service delivery model and adopting the rhetoric of particular types of service provision (for example, restorative justice) is not sufficient in its own right to guarantee a significant change in operational practice. Long established ways of doing things, reliance on the same old community networks, and limited staff development opportunities are all factors that influence how offenders are dealt with at a day-to-day level. Moreover, there is often tension between 'rehabilitation' and 'control' objectives and imperatives at the coalface of corrective services. One consequence of this, is that, regardless of 'official' institutional philosophy, there may be resistance among some staff to the adoption of innovative methods of working with offenders. Alternatively, the institution may acquire the new language of corrections for policy document purposes (we do 'case management'), but the actual practices may reflect traditional or conventional corrections agendas (our main task is containment of the offender). The development of appropriate offender services frequently reflects these ambiguities and conflicts over purposes.

Offender Assessment

Without adequate and precise risk assessment it is unlikely that community corrections interventions will be successful in reducing or preventing recidivism. One of the issues surrounding risk assessment is what it is that is actually being assessed. For instance, a criminogenic risk assessment specifically targets those factors directly related to the offending behaviour (eg., alcohol use and violent behaviour).

On the other hand, risk assessment based upon social factors tends to direct attention to wider contexts of health and wellbeing (eg., poverty and unemployment). From the point of view of program orientation and implementation, the most effective forms of intervention tend to be those directed at criminogenic causes. Nevertheless, the social context within which these factors become significant forms part of the reason for the offending behaviour and cannot be completely ignored.

Another issue relating to assessment has to do with different parts of corrective services using different assessment models and criteria. The difficulty may arise as to how to provide an integrated offender management strategy if the diagnostic tools are not the same. Alternatively, the problem may simply be one of different assessment projects, within the overarching system and philosophical framework.

Offender Management

Offender management can refer to two different things. First, how to best target resources to meet particular offender's

needs and to address pertinent risk factors. This is primarily a matter of assessment of discrete individuals, and discerning those criminogenic needs most closely associated with the offending behaviour (Roberts, 2001).

Secondly, offender management refers to allocation of resources relative to specific groups of offenders. In this case, the key issue is how to best to assign particular categories of offender greater attention and resources than others, based upon risk and needs assessment. It is assumed that, on the basis of past experience and offender profiles, that some offenders will require greater care and intervention than others.

From a management perspective, it is necessary to prioritise resource allocation in the most effective manner. This might take the form of a 'casebank' model. This refers to an organisational method of allocating resources in which non-targeted offenders are ranked in order of level of risk/needs, and as individuals move through the system, resources that have been freed up are distributed on the basis of the ranking order. Offenders who are deemed to be low risk and low needs may receive very little in the way of direct supervision or intervention by correctional services staff.

Conversely, those deemed to be high risk and high need will be allocated supervisory staff and program support as a matter of priority. They collectively constitute targeted cases, and are thus not considered suitable for the casebank model.

Offender programs

Selection of programs for offenders depends upon the quality of the assessment process, the ways in which offender interventions are prioritised and allocated, and the availability of programs. There may be conflicts over whether to put time, energy and resources

"Non-targeted cases, after considering risk level, would be supervised using casebank model and/or receive sole sanction sentencing. A sole sanction is an immediate penalty such as community service and a fine which is imposed without continued probation supervision or incarceration. Sole sanctions represent a cost-effective means to provide consequences for non targeted offenders." (Clawson, 2001:10)

into 'generic' programs (such as employment or education) or 'specialist' programs (such as anger management and sex offender). Much hinges upon whether or not there are trained, professional staff available to offer various types of programs.

So too, unless community-based programs are evaluated and monitored closely, then there is no way on really knowing how a program is assisting an offender or is working to reduce the likelihood of re-offending. One essential question to ask is: does the program address the criminogenic factors giving rise to the original offending behaviour?

Staff Performance

Key Issue: how well can we deliver the service?

The quality of any service ultimately depends upon the quality of the staff delivering the service. There are many different factors that shape service provision, ranging from level of financial and physical resources available, through to staff morale and career structure. Staff performance is basically a matter of maximising human resources in ways that contribute to a healthy, productive and co-operative work environment. For this to occur, all staff must be fully aware of institutional philosophy and objectives, be accountable for their actions in relation to these, and be provided with opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that will make their work easier and achievable relative to agency goals. A fundamentally important aspect of service delivery is that each participant be clear about what it is the institution is trying to achieve, and, crucially, that they have adequate guidance as to what they can do at an applied level to put the policy into practice.

Accountability of Line Staff and Management

What each person does within community corrections organisation reflects important divisions of labour. One division of labour is technical in nature- it simply refers to the fact that different skills are needed for different types of jobs (whether this be supervision of an offender, or managing a budget, or putting together a record-keeping system). Another type of division of labour refers to social differences within a work system based on decision-making procedures, chains of command and organisational networks.

Accountability is about how best to marshal human resources in both these areas- that is, to ensure competency in performance, and receptiveness in execution.

Effective and efficient working relationships are premised upon all members of an organisation bearing some responsibility for the operation of that organisation. Everyone is thus accountable for the overall work environment, and what occurs within that environment. In this sense, accountability is a two-way street: it includes accountability of line staff to managers for their performance, as well as accountability of managers to provide line staff with adequate direction, support and leadership (see Home Office, 2002).

Issues surrounding accountability often revolve around *communication* (of goals, of activities, of problems, of expectations), *information* (about strategic concepts, about good practices, about case examples) and *conflict*

resolution (concerning work performance, pay and conditions, differences of opinion or perspective). Where there are not adequate measures and procedures put in place in respect of these social processes, then breakdown between parties and thus accountability is more likely. It is hard to hold people accountable if there is perceived disagreement between them, regardless of where they sit within the organisational structure.

On the other hand, accountability demands respect for, and commitment to, organisational aims and goals. This means that personnel experience and perception must always be tempered by consideration of wider institutional structures and missions.

Professional Supervision

One of the ways in which managers are accountable to line staff is through implementation of appropriate methods

“There was a clear difference between probation officer and service managers in terms of what they wanted in a professional supervisor’s background. The probation officers wanted supervisors with qualifications in social work, psychology, or supervision, a person with practice experience and someone they felt personally comfortable with. On the other hand, the service managers wanted supervisors with management background who were trustworthy” (Donoghue, et. al., 1998:5)

of professional supervision. Community corrections field staff necessarily have

a high degree of professional discretion at their disposal. Decisions have to be made in the field on the basis of informed judgement regarding specific offenders, specific situations and specific potential outcomes. Supervision that is too close or that is based upon inflexible rules will diminish the ability of practitioners to perform their tasks.

However, there is an important role for managers in guiding line staff in the carrying out of their roles. For instance, in Western Australia, Senior Community Corrections Officers are responsible for the task of supervising Community Correction Officers. Effective supervision is seen to occur on two levels:

- Supervision of milestones, such as preparation of Individual Management Plan and closure of offender files.
- Mentoring and guidance in the day-to-day operations of offender management.

An initiative to enhance the professional standards of Community Correction Officers in Western Australia has seen the development of the Professional Practice Standards Unit. The unit has developed standards that are designed to ensure consistency of service delivery to all offenders (Western Australian Auditor General, 2001:31)

A further aspect of professional supervision is recognition that different positions within the overall division of labour may require different types of supervision. Importantly, supervision should be seen as integral to staff relations and work performance, rather than as threatening professional autonomy or individual discretion.

Institutional Arrangements

Key Issue: what factors influence how we carry out our tasks?

Service delivery demands a lot in terms of physical infrastructure, human resources and technical support. Good service provision requires the best possible allocation of appropriate resources, and the building of the most suitable and productive networks and partnerships. Bearing in mind the central organising concepts of community corrections (such as restorative justice, integrated offender management, case management, community safety), it is essential to tailor resource allocation in the most strategically relevant fashion. That is, resources need to be allocated and developed in ways that best reflect the aims and objectives of the agency. An essential part of this process is regular audits of financial, human and other resources, plus adequate data collection in order to measure progress and effectiveness relative to expenditure of time, energy and money. Another factor that shapes community corrections work, including use of resources (in terms of costs, savings and benefits), is the nature of any intra-governmental and community-government partnerships.

Resource Allocation

Staff development and training is or ought to be a first and foremost concern in any discussion of resource allocation. Particularly in the fields involving direct hands-on service provision and that rely upon positive social networks and relationships, human resources are of the utmost importance. Valuing the contribution of people can be explicitly achieved via various forms of staff in-service programs, communication strategies, structured time-outs and training opportunities. The dilemma for agencies is how to maximise staff development in context of shrinking or inadequate financial and physical resources. Partnerships with community and educational providers might be one way in which to enhance existing infrastructure.

“To fully realise the benefits of community-based programming, Corrections and the community will need to work together. In some instances, this may require a shift in attitude about inmates from one that would prefer to see them banished from the community towards one that sees inmates as future members of our community who need help adjusting to a law-abiding and productive lifestyle” (The Saskatchewan Ombudsman Special Report: Inmate Services and Conditions in Saskatchewan Correctional Centres, 2002:50)

Another resource that needs to be explored in greater depth is Information Technology and allied developments. The issue here is how best to use the new technologies without intruding or overwhelming the ‘human factor’ in corrections work. Creative application of new information and communications technologies may open up new possibilities in professional development, professional supervision and performance enhancement. However, they may also contribute to work over-load, frustration at technical glitches and removal of important thinking time and silent reflection.

Data management is increasingly important to many agencies. But the danger with a fixation with quantitative analysis (that is, number of breachers, number of clients of employment referrals, and so on) is that community corrections may be defined solely as a technical exercise in which accountability is measured by how well resources are co-ordinated, rather than changes in the offender (see Rhine & Hinzeman, 2000).

Community and Bureaucracy

The work of community corrections staff may become routinised in ways that emphasise system needs rather than local community concerns. The net result of this is to alienate one of the most vital resources in community corrections- the community.

How best to mobilise community members and community institutions,

within the framework of progressive community corrections visions, is a major challenge today. Not only is the problem one of clearly articulating preferred intervention models to the community, but of ensuring that community participation is not pre-empted through unnecessary or inappropriate bureaucratic rules and procedures, including unsuitable

performance measure.
“As the scope and complexity of work rapidly evolves in today’s world, bureaucracies react by expanding the tasks of existing jobs and creating a variety of new ones. In the process, they drive their ill-prepared staff either to the point of exhaustion or into outright revolt at being held accountable for a universe of discrete performances that no human being could reasonably accomplish. (Domurat, 2000:50)

The nature of community involvement requires close scrutiny. For example, there may be instances in which participation with a community agency is counter-productive for community corrections staff. This occurs when staff time is used up in ‘talk shops’ with community ‘partners’ but no action is ever undertaken nor any offender service provided. The relationship between community and community corrections has many different dimensions, and includes both pitfalls and possibilities. Identification of these is essential to signposting new directions for community corrections into the 21st century.

Achieving Goals

Key Issue: how do we know we are doing what we say we are doing?

The raison d'être of community corrections will vary depending upon the philosophical rationale of the specific approach adopted. Once decisions are made regarding the central mission of an agency, and the main strategies that are to inform operational practices, then the question becomes that of establishing 'what works' in relation to the stated goals. Evaluation is basically about assessing what is being done, valuing why things are being done the way they are, and understanding how best to make improvements in the future. Evaluation is and ought to be an ongoing process. It is important to build a 'culture of evaluation' if theory and practice in community corrections is to keep up with changing circumstances and the occasional crisis. The work of community corrections services is often subject to public scrutiny and criticism (often unwarranted and uninformed). In the light of this, it is important to continuously monitor performance and relationships in the field, in order to keep abreast of change and to better defend the field generally.

Evaluation of Community Corrections

The purpose of evaluation is to ascertain 'what works' and more emphatically 'what really does work' (Roberts, 2001). The point of evaluation is to collect evidence about the operational effects and consequences of community service intervention. To put it differently, we need to know the difference between an effective program or intervention strategy, and those that are not. Effective use of resources, effective management of offenders demands rigorous analysis of the 'fit' between content and methods employed and the requirements of the offender.

Another aspect of the evaluation process is the need to promote 'good practice'. Professional community corrections work must be based upon a repertoire of practices, skills and knowledges that can be drawn upon variously depending upon circumstances. Evaluation provides one avenue for the development of a 'tool kit' of good practices. It also can be used to generate appropriate standards and practice guidelines for staff new to the field.

Accountability of Community Organisations

The involvement of the community organisations in conjunction with government agencies will vary greatly in terms of activities and the degree of partnership engagement. The accountability of community 'partners' is important to consider in any

evaluation of community corrections service. Specifically, under what kinds of arrangements are community-based organisations to be held responsible and accountable for appropriate outcomes and professional practices? In other words, how is quality assurance to be guaranteed when the funding agency (ie. Community Correction Service) is not necessarily the service delivery agency (eg. local church or charity group).

At a formal level, funding may be made contingent upon certain contractual obligations. Yet, this in and of itself, may not be sufficient to ensure adequate levels of 'good practice' by the community organisation. The issue here is who within the government agency is to supervise the activities of the community agency, what criteria are they to use in assessing agency practices and acting upon this assessment, what kind of sanctions might be brought to bear on individuals, groups or entire agencies if 'good practice' is not adhered to by participants.

To complicate matters further, community agencies may be involved in community corrections in very different capacities, and these in turn have implications for how they might be evaluated. Consider the following:

Agency A deals with offenders on Community Service Orders. The emphasis is on something being done by the offender for and in the context of the community agency. The offender

is obligated by law, as a part of the sentencing sanction, to perform community service for the community agency. They are compelled to do something for the agency. Accountability in this instance might refer to adherence to correctional philosophy, reference to national standards and guidelines for practice, and systematic record-keeping and offender assessment process.

Agency B deals mainly with offenders who are on Parole or Probation Orders. These orders are administered by the government community corrections service. They may include directives for the offender to attend particular services (such as alcohol and drug treatment). The emphasis is on something being done to the offender (close supervision) and something being done for the offender (by community service agency). The offender may be compelled to attend a service, but this is so that the service can do something for the offender. Accountability in this instance might refer to periodic evaluation data about the particular service on offer, cost benefit analysis, and analysis of offender life patterns before and after service use. Each scenario calls forth a different sort of evaluation process. Depending upon the type of service provided, even if by the same provider, it will be necessary for the funding agency to clarify 'what works' on the part of community partners, and to develop suitable evaluation criteria accordingly.

Research

Key Issue: What is the future of community corrections?

Learning from successes as well as from mistakes and failures is part and parcel of any planning process. For those involved in community corrections it is valuable to have a sense of the historical development of the field, particularly with respect to changing concepts and approaches, and how operational practices have shifted over time. It is useful to bear in mind, however, that what may have failed in the past, may have failed not because of a bad idea, but because of poor implementation. In a similar vein, present difficulties and setbacks may be due to misunderstanding of principal goals and objectives, as much as antiquated practices. They could also stem from problems related to the translation of lofty ideals into concrete activities that practitioners can make sense of and build skills around. To understand fully what works and what does not work requires research and evaluation, and comparisons of different practice models and experiences. Importantly, as a work environment and institutionalised system of offender intervention, community corrections must always take into account the 'human factor' - that is, it is people who deliver the service, and people who are its recipients.

Field Research

Improvements in institutional operations and staff practices demands that attention be paid to contemporary developments in corrections generally, across many different jurisdictions. However, the most relevant research for practitioners will generally consist of those studies based upon grounded field research. That is to say, theoretical debates over criminological and penological rationales and concepts, while essential to further refinement of ideas and new thinking, it must be linked at some stage to what is occurring in the field. Moreover, it is incumbent upon practitioners to become part of the field research process- to identify practices, problems and processes that require systematic evaluation and analysis.

Forward Planning

An important aspect of work in the corrections field is the ability to look 'over the horizon', to anticipate changes before they occur. These changes may occur in the composition and number of the offender population. They could include changes in legislation, in budget allocations, in political climates. They might refer to new concepts and 'good practice' models introduced elsewhere, or initiated in local setting nearby. Awareness of trends and issues is the best way to guarantee in-put into the shaping of future directions, rather than being swept away by the tide of change.

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