



Family and Corrections Network

RESEARCH & BACKGROUND

a source book on families of offenders

James William Mustin, Editor

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Working Papers '87

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Waynesboro, Virginia

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, many people have contacted me seeking information on families of offenders. Newspaper reporters, university professors and students, corrections managers, TV talk show hosts, directors of family programs, legislative committee staff, offenders and their families, all these share a common experience. Information on families of offenders is hard to find.

When I began looking into programs for families of offenders about 1980, I had a similar experience. I could not find information on families of offenders anywhere. Little mentioned in textbooks on corrections, no journal on the subject, no books in the library, correctional managers uninterested or hostile, librarians looking a bit annoyed that I asked for material they did not have... then I found Centerforce and Friends Outside in California and Women in Crisis in Connecticut. This led to my discovery of the Holt-Miller report and so on. Gradually over the months I realized a lot was happening in the field of families of offenders. My fascination with the topic led me to begin publishing the quarterly, FCN Working Papers in November 1983.

Three and a half years later I find I have accumulated so much information on families of offenders that an anthology series seems necessary.

So here is the first in a series of four anthologies on families of offenders. In this volume you will find the most frequently requested, hard to find, not widely known, yet essential data on families of offenders. This Research and Background anthology will be followed by Institutional Programs, Community Programs, and Advocacy.

For ease of reference, articles have been grouped by topic. The table of contents is designed to make locating needed information quick and easy. The margins allow space for use of a three hole punch. This gives the reader the option of putting the material in a three ring binder. What has taken me years to find, you can find in a few seconds.

I hope you will find this volume contains the information you need. I would appreciate suggestions for improvement.

Special thanks to Newsweek for permission to reprint "My Husband is in Prison" and to Creasie Hairston, Don McDonald and Carmela Southers for their kind assistance at various stages of production.

Jim Mustin
Editor

about Family and Corrections Network ...

Families involved in correctional systems are generally ignored, neglected or abused. Yet these same families represent our nation's greatest potential resource for positive change of our criminal justice system.

Working independently, many organizations have developed positive, cost-effective, humane programs to strengthen the family ties of hard-core maximum security prisoners and naive juvenile runaways. Programs have developed that step beyond the rhetoric of punishment and rehabilitation to a realistic reliance on the institution of the family as a critical factor for criminal justice policy. These programs serve families in prisons, juvenile courts, probation offices, youth homes, work release centers and many other settings. Some programs are run by correctional agencies. Many are run by private, non-profit groups. Some are secular. Some are religious. Most of these programs tend to bridge bureaucratic boundaries. Still, these programs have a common thread. Their cornerstone is the family.

Family and Corrections Network has been established to help bring these programs together. Serving as an independent clearinghouse for information on working with families involved in correctional systems since 1983, Family and Corrections Network (FCN) is a program of the Family and Corrections Foundation, a not-for-profit service organization incorporated in Virginia. Family and Corrections Network publishes quarterly Working Papers on family programs and a yearly Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders. In addition, Family and Corrections Network provides technical assistance for developing family programs and sponsors conferences and workshops.

Any interested person may participate in Family and Corrections Network by sharing information, ideas and resources, by subscribing to the Working Papers or by donating money services or materials.

With the help of many people, Family and Corrections has been founded and is now led by James W. Mustin, an acknowledged authority in the emerging field of family programs for corrections. He has developed and presented numerous workshops and conferences on family and corrections issues on the state and national level.

Family and Corrections Network is funded by donations and by subscriptions to the Working Papers.

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The Family: A Critical Factor for Corrections by James William Mustin, Director, Family and Corrections Network. This is a November 1, 1987 revision of the article originally appearing in the Proceedings of the 29th Annual Southern Conference on Corrections. Used with permission.

Texts on corrections give few references to the offender's family. Until 1983, no periodical was published specifically for those working with families involved in correctional systems (FCN Working Papers, 1983). Yet, there is substantial evidence that the family is a critical factor in the correctional process. Studies of prison release success rates, offender behavior in institutions, and treatment of juvenile offenders show the offender's family is a critical factor for the full spectrum of offenders from juvenile status offenders to maximum security felons.

A seminal study, Explorations in Inmate - Family Relationships (Holt, Miller, 1972) examined prisoner-family relationships in the California Department of Corrections and reviewed previous studies of the impact of family ties on parole release success.

"The central finding of this research is the discovery of a strong and consistently positive relationship between parole success and the maintenance of strong family ties while in prison. The reliability of this research is substantiated by the results of other research undertakings ... The positive relationship between strength of social ties and success on parole has held up for 45 years of releases across very diverse offender populations and in different localities. It is doubtful if there is any other research finding in the field of corrections which can approximate this record" (Holt, Miller, 1972: 61).

More recent research by the State of New York Department of Correctional Services indicates private family visits for prisoners are a positive influence on offender behavior both in prison (Grossman, 1981) and upon release (Macdonald, 1980). A February 1985 Massachusetts Department of Corrections study found "... correctional programs operating in the Massachusetts system which are geared to maintain, to establish or re-establish general societal links such as family, economic, political, and social roles may be associated with a subsequent reduction in recidivism." (LeClair, 1985) A Sacramento, California Juvenile Court study has shown diversionary family therapy programs more

promising than probation (Baron, Feeny and Thornton, 1973). A study at Eugene, Oregon Juvenile Court found: "The statistical evidence suggests that family counseling has a strong impact on reducing the number of children under court supervision who repeat offenses." The authors of the Eugene, Oregon study conclude that "...juvenile court intervention which focuses on the family is more effective than interventions that focus primarily on the child" (McPherson, McDonald and Ryer, 1983: 32). Studies by the National Resource Center on Family Based Services have shown intensive, family-based services to be a cost-effective alternative to removing children from troubled homes (Hutchison, 1982) (Prevention Report, 1982). A study at a boys state correctional school in a southeastern state found parental visiting had "a direct beneficial effect" upon the behavior of the boys at the institution (Borgman, 1985).

Not only has the family been shown to be an effective resource for dealing with a variety of offenders, but the family is often a key factor in two behavior patterns associated with crime: violence and chemical dependency. Contrary to the heroin addict's lone wolf stereotype, "...studies have documented the frequent contact that exists between the addict and his parents. Even in his late twenties or thirties he either lives at home or sees his parents regularly" (Stanton, 1977: 7). There are indications that family oriented treatment of drug addiction is more effective than individual focused methods (Stanton, 1977: 8-9). Alcoholism, too, is a family problem: "...pathological drinking becomes integrated into the family system and leads to predictable compulsive behavior, both in individual family members and in the interaction between them" (Wegscheider, 1981: 29). Studies have shown that about 50% of those that are alcoholics are children of alcoholics, that children of alcoholics have significantly higher rates of foster care placement, juvenile delinquency and suicide attempts and that 60% of nonalcoholic wives of alcoholics

had alcoholic fathers (Wegscheider, 1981: 29-30). Like chemical dependency, violence is, in many ways, a family problem. Gelles (1984) reports "...at least 7 to 8 million American households are the scenes of one form of abusive family violence each year" and that "residents of the United States are more likely to be murdered in their homes by members of their families than anywhere else or by anyone else in our society." A U. S. Department of Justice report links violent behavior to a history of abuse. "Violent behavior and physical and psychological abnormalities often appear among children and adolescents subjected to extreme abuse and violence in their families." (Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice, 1984)

The same U. S. Department of Justice Report states that a high number of offenders come from unstable homes, that prison inmates are likely to have relatives that served time and that most inmates have dependent children. "Despite the high proportion of unmarried inmates, more than half had children, almost all of them under age 18. More than a third had three or more children." (Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice, 1984)

This data both confirms the common sense awareness that families influence behavior and points the way toward a new ordering of priorities for corrections. If contact between the offender and the family is a key to success upon release, the prison system should be operated to maximize this contact - not frustrate it, as is usually the case. Correctional caseworkers should be told that it is their job to work with the family in mind, not just the individual offender and they should be taught the skills and provided the resources to do so. Correctional staff should be trained to relate to the families of offenders as a precious resource, at times difficult to work with, but nonetheless invaluable. The arrest/incarceration/release cycle should be evaluated for its impact on the offender's family (Fishman and Alissi, 1979). Procedures destructive to family relationships should be identified and changed to reduce or eliminate damage ("Policy Recommendations Families of Adult Offenders", 1986).

This proposed reordering of priorities for corrections would require substantial investment in policy revision and retraining of staff, but small investment in bricks and mortar or additional staff. Families of offenders constitute an almost unlimited free resource available to corrections. Programs using volunteer staff administered by nonprofit community agencies will often be more effective in dealing with families than paid correctional staff (Fishman, Alissi, 1979:17). Staff training priorities would need revision and some additional training would have to be provided, but no special certifications are required to begin working more effectively with families. Policy revisions would require study and some agencies would find a need to retain consultants. To work more effectively with families, corrections is faced not with a problem of fundraising but with a challenge of management: to set goals and to marshal available resources to meet them.

The resources for working with families involved in correctional systems include the existing knowledge base, various programs in the United States and other countries, and the families of offenders themselves. The knowledge base for working with families has not always been easily available to corrections professionals. Social work, a profession with extensive skills for working with families, has tended to shun the correctional client, but this trend may be changing (Roberts, 1983). Family systems (Bowen, 1978) (Satir, 1967) (Staunton, 1977) has recently developed a body of theory and practice with tremendous implications for corrections. More than providing techniques for family counseling, family systems offers a new way of looking at crime and our response to crime.

Family oriented research in corrections has been occasional rather than ongoing. In addition to the studies cited earlier, several useful documents are available. The American Correctional Association (1981) published a study of the Mexican Penal Colony at Islas Marias where long term prisoners and their

families live together in a community setting. Fishman and Cassin's (1981) Services to Families of Offenders gives valuable, but now dated, review of the literature relevant to adult prisoners and their families.

The Directory of Programs Serving Families of Adult Offenders (NIC, June 1985) identified 109 programs in the United States and 21 in Canada which offer specific services to families of offenders or to those working with the offender's family. Direct services to families included information on the criminal justice system and sources of assistance, emotional support, counseling, child care, parenting skills classes; legal services, hospitality centers, temporary shelter, transportation and political lobbying. Services to those working with families of offenders included information, staff training, consultation, and mediation of disputes between prison management and visitors. Family and Corrections Network (FCN), publishes a quarterly, FCN Working Papers, with information for those working with families involved in correctional systems. In May, 1986 FCN sponsored the 1st National Leadership Conference on Families of Adult Offenders. Soon to be published by the National Institute of Corrections, the proceedings of the conference, "Policy Recommendations on Families of Adult Offenders" gives a concensus of current thinking in the field. FCN also offers technical assistance and training service for those interested in developing family programs for corrections.

Perhaps the most important resource for working with families involved in correctional systems is the families themselves. Offering irreplaceable service as natural support systems for offenders, these families are the true experts on themselves. To become informed on the needs and characteristics of these families, one should spend time with them, listening and observing with the care and objectivity that comes from genuine respect. Families involved in correctional systems tend to be hypersensitive to anything that smacks of manipulation or coercion, and suspicious of the symbols of authority (Comeau, 1983).

When treated with respect, these families usually become receptive.

In addition to offering service as natural support systems and information sources, the families of offenders can potentially fill a great gap in the correctional system - the lack of a political constituency. Corrections needs an informed group of citizens who care about the day-to-day conditions of both staff and offenders and who will take these concerns to elected officials. Families of offenders can become that constituency. This process has already begun in Texas and California where political interest groups of families and friends of offenders have influenced legislative and executive processes impacting corrections. While some corrections professionals may feel threatened by the growing political influence of families of offenders, the possibility of a cooperative and productive alliance has already been demonstrated in California.

Corrections has traditionally served as the state's instrument for delivery of punishment and services to individual offenders. But crime is more than a conflict between the individual and the state; crime is a problem of broken human relationships (Epps, 1982) (Zehr, 1980). The family is the fulcrum of human relationships. Corrections which focuses only on the individual is not capable of dealing effectively with either human relationships or the family. Ignoring the way crime and our response to crime affects victims, offenders and their families, individual-focused corrections offers endless variations on the iron fist of punishment, clothed in fashionable velvet gloves of rehabilitation. The family offers a new look at corrections and a resource for constructive change.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS ON FAMILIES OF ADULT OFFENDERS

Proceedings of the First National Leadership Conference on

Families of Adult Offenders

Waynesboro, Virginia

May 13-15, 1986

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Virginia Department of Corrections

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PREFACE

The First National Leadership Conference on Families of Adult Offenders met in Waynesboro, Virginia, May 13-15, 1986. The conference was sponsored by Family and Corrections Network with the generous support of the National Institute of Corrections and the Academy for Staff Development of the Virginia Department of Corrections. Participants came from throughout the United States, from agencies in 20 states and the District of Columbia. All had a record of leadership in serving families of adult offenders. The purpose of the conference was to establish policy recommendations for positive family programs.

A working document, these recommendations only begin to define needs and suggest positive responses.

These recommendations have been endorsed by conference participants. A list of conference participants is provided in Appendix A. Concerned individuals and organizations are encouraged to consider and endorse this document as well. Any such endorsements, as well as any questions concerning the preparation of this document should be addressed to James W. Mustin, Executive Director, Family and Corrections Network, P.O. Box 2103, Waynesboro, Virginia 22980.

A limited supply of single copies of this document is available free from the National Institute of Corrections Information Center, 1790 30th Street, Suite 130, Boulder, CO 80301, (303) 444-1101.

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INTRODUCTION

The intent of these recommendations is to strengthen the family ties of adult offenders. There are two principal reasons for being concerned with the families of prisoners and other offenders involved in the criminal justice system: 1) Stronger family ties for offenders mean safer communities. 2) The families of offenders are in crisis and deserve support.

Studies have consistently shown that prisoners who maintain family ties do significantly better on release than those who do not. These recommendations are designed to enhance this effect by helping families of offenders from the time of arrest, through incarceration until offenders are successfully reintegrated into the community.

Families of offenders deserve support not only because they can be effective allies in the fight for safer communities, but because they are innocent, unintended victims of crime. They suffer separation, economic hardship and social stigma. Suffering is especially acute for the children of prisoners, whose growth and development is jeopardized by separation from their parents. In addition, the majority of prisoners in the United States are Blacks or other minorities and almost all have low incomes. This means that families under social strain are the ones hardest hit by increasing rates of incarceration.

In response to both humanitarian and public safety concerns we recommend comprehensive action by government leaders, criminal justice and human service agencies and the community at large in cooperation with the families of offenders. Blacks and other minorities experiencing disproportionate incarceration rates should have strong representation throughout this decision making and service delivery process.

These recommendations fall into four groups: government policies and procedures, the role of the criminal justice system, community support, and the role of research.

I. GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Criminal justice and human service agencies should work to maintain and strengthen the offender family unit. Such efforts should include:

- A. Using alternatives to incarceration to the greatest extent possible.
- B. Using the least restrictive methods possible when arresting or searching parents in the presence of their children.
- C. Giving family members the opportunity to participate in any hearings bearing on family relationships.
- D. Choosing new jail and prison locations that increase family access. This will usually mean locating facilities within major metropolitan areas.
- E. Routinely housing prisoners in the appropriate facility closest to their family, unless the prisoner requests otherwise.
- F. Supporting offenders' civil right to marry.
- G. Training agency staff to value and respect the families of offenders, to know their special needs, and to protect offenders' parental rights.

II. THE ROLE OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Research has shown that strong prisoner-family ties reduce recidivism. Therefore, it is in the interest of the criminal justice system to maintain and strengthen family ties through the adoption of system-wide policies and programs. These policies and programs should include the following: a system of family support services, provision for information access by families, encouragement of family communication by letter and telephone, strong support for visiting activities, and special programs for incarcerated parents and their children.

A. FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Family support services should be available at each stage of the criminal justice process. Such services should include:

1. Marriage counseling and relationship building programs to promote adjustment and growth during separation and upon reunion.
2. Parenting skills programs for prisoners and family members.
3. Family crisis intervention services to prevent unnecessary stress and delayed problem resolution.
4. Pre-release programs which prepare prisoners for family reunification as well as employment and community re-entry.
5. Family services inside jails and prisons, provided by liaison personnel from public and private organizations, who can assist with family problems and facilitate prisoner-family communication.

B. INFORMATION ACCESS

The criminal justice system should encourage information access for family members designated by offenders. Such access should include:

1. Family orientation to each stage of the criminal justice process the offender may expect to encounter - from arrest to return to the community.
2. Family notice, within the rules of confidentiality, of changes in offender status or location, especially changes affecting mail or visiting.
3. Family access to correctional counselors, probation and parole officers, and other casework personnel.
4. Clear oral and written communication to families using plain words in a language understood by the family.

C. FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Criminal justice agencies should encourage communication between prisoners and their families. Such efforts should include:

1. Avoiding external identification of prison or jail origin on mail from prisoners.
2. Providing for some free long-distance telephone calls from prisoners to their families.

D. FAMILY VISITING

Jails and prisons should provide a variety of programs to encourage visiting in the least restrictive environment. Such efforts should include:

1. A safe, secure and orderly visiting environment that promotes low stress, meaningful interaction between prisoners and their families.
2. Rules and regulations developed through the combined effort of institutional personnel, families and prisoners.
3. Visitor information handbooks, updated appropriately, with information on visiting rules, hours and conditions, nearby lodging, transportation, visitor service organizations and other human services.
4. Prompt notice to visitors of substantive changes in visiting rules, hours and conditions.
5. Visitor centers at or near major institutions.
6. Support for transportation services from urban centers to jails and state prisons.
7. Visiting hours that are congruent with public transportation schedules.
8. Support for frequent visiting. A minimum of one visit a week should be allowed priority over the prisoner's institutional assignment.

9. Provisions for visitors to bring packages for prisoners.
10. Assigning a single staff person ongoing responsibility for the management of visiting.

E. SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR INCARCERATED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

About half of the male prisoners and at least 70% of the female prisoners in the United States have children under 18 years of age. These children are the forgotten victims of the criminal justice system. The trauma of separation from their parents seriously threatens their growth and development. There is a special need to help them and to nurture their relationship with the incarcerated parent. This is especially critical for the single, head-of-household parent, the situation of most prison mothers. Programs for incarcerated parents and their children should include:

1. Training for all involved public agents in the appropriate care and treatment of prisoners' children.
2. Programs within jails and prisons for parent-child bonding as well as programs designed to strengthen parent-child relationships. These should include:
 - a. Contact visiting in safe, child-centered settings with weekend/overnight visiting by children wherever possible.
 - b. Parenting skills training and support for offenders.
 - c. Support services and crisis intervention for prison parents and their children.

3. Legal services for incarcerated parents which enable them to respond effectively to issues of foster care placement, creation of guardianships, visitation, custody and other legal actions concerning their children.
4. Responsible and adequate care for pregnant prisoners. These efforts should include:
 - a. Placing pregnant prisoners in community-based alternatives to incarceration whenever possible.
 - b. Improving perinatal care within jails and prisons to meet modern medical standards. This will usually require contracting with community health care providers.
 - c. Addressing infant needs with early placement planning and mother-infant bonding programs, including live-in nursery programs for infants inside of jails and prisons.

III. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Offenders' families face rejection and social isolation as well as economic and emotional hardships. Community support for offenders' families should begin early in the criminal justice process, before hardship becomes overwhelming and social isolation becomes a pattern. The incarceration of a family member is a crisis touching every aspect of family life. Community response should address emotional, economic, social, and spiritual needs. Community awareness should be mobilized for positive, informed action extending through the period of incarceration until the offender's successful re-integration into the family and the community. Community support efforts should include:

- A. Local coordinating agencies linking offenders' families with community services.
- B. Advocates for families faced with discrimination.
- C. Counseling, support groups, family networking and recreation services, information and referral, and advocacy.
- D. Support from the religious community for families facing the spiritual crisis of the incarceration of a family member.
- E. Reduced cost or free transportation for prison visits.
- F. Emergency financial assistance for basic survival needs such as food, clothing and shelter.
- G. Initiatives which bring the needs and strengths of offenders' families to the attention of lawmakers and the community.

IV. THE ROLE OF RESEARCH

Previous research has demonstrated a strong, positive relationship between the maintenance of offender-family ties and the reduction of adult repeat crime. The existing research base should be expanded and new research relating to the dynamics of offender-family relationships should be developed. Research is a necessary and important element of program development, design, and evaluation and should be a collaborative effort of the correctional, academic, and philanthropic communities.

A. Research efforts should increase the knowledge and understanding of:

1. The dynamics of family crises precipitated by arrest and/or incarceration and the means of effective recovery from such crisis.
2. The role of the personal support system of the offender, particularly the family, in the reduction of repeat adult crime.
3. The problems families experience in maintaining and strengthening family ties and in carrying out family roles and commitments.
4. The special needs and strengths of offenders' families within Black and other minority groups.

B. Researchers should also:

1. Develop an effective national data base on family characteristics and family ties of offenders. Standard procedures for informed consent, privacy and confidentiality should be followed.
2. Define a service delivery model for the families of offenders which addresses the entire course of the criminal justice experience.

3. Develop comprehensive directories which identify services and programs for the maintenance of offender family ties and personal support systems.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and services for families of offenders.

APPENDIX A

Participants: First National Leadership Conference on Families of Adult Offenders

Ellen M. Barry, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, San Francisco CA
Barbara Bloom, Centerforce, San Quentin CA
Lloyd Bridges, Riverside Residential Center, Indianapolis IN
Nickie Carpenter, Friends Outside, Riverside CA
Gail Cohen, SOLOS (Sharing Our Lives of Separation), Minneapolis MN
Alison Coleman, Prisoner Family Project, Albany NY
Clara Coleman, Families Outside, Verona PA
Kimberly Comeau, Citizens for Humane and Effective Corrections, Inc., Richmond VA
Bruce Cruser, Prison Visitation Project, Richmond VA
Susan Dansand, W.A.I.T. II and Friends (We Are Inmates Too), Milwaukee WI
Shirley B. Ellison, Georgia Women's Correctional Institution, Milledgeville GA
Judy Evans, Friends Outside in Santa Clara County, Sunnyvale CA
Elizabeth Gaynes, The Osborne Association, New York NY
Majorie G. Ginsburg, OAR, Fairfax VA
Creasia F. Hairston, Ph.D. Parents in Prison/West Virginia University, Charleston WV
Mamie Hammonds, Project Return, Nashville TN
Christine J. Herlinger, Legal Assistance for Mothers in Prison, Durham NC
Edna Hinton, Academy for Staff Development, Waynesboro VA
Jacqueline A. Holmes, Oregon People for Prison Alternatives, Portland OR
Donna M. Leone, Middle Ground, Tempe AZ
John T. Mavros, The Joint Connection, Newark NJ

Carolyn McCall, Prison MATCH, Oakland CA

Barbara A. Moore, RSM Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, Rochester NY

Rev. Dr. Earl B. Moore, New York State Department of Correctional Service, Albany NY

Jim Mustin, Family and Corrections Network, Waynesboro VA

Joseph D. Ossmann, Friends Outside National Office, Salinas CA

June Pearse, Prison PATCH, Jefferson City MO

Ned Pfundt, Friends Outside, Pittsburgh PA

Dorothy Plocher, FOCUS (Families and Friends of Convicts United for Support),
Canon City CO

Nancy Randall, Department of Corrections, Niantic CT

Ned Rollo, OPEN, INC., Dallas TX

Sister Elaine Roulet, Catholic Charities, Bedford Hills NY

Jehanna Schuchert, M.I.L.K. (Mothers/Men Inside Loving Kids), Richmond VA

Constance Shepard, Georgia Women's Correctional Institution, Milledgeville GA

Gail T. Smith, John Howard Association/Chicago Legal Aid to Incarcerated Mothers,
Chicago IL

Pauline Sullivan, CURE, Washington DC

Nancy A. Whitmore, Terrell House, Tallahassee FL

Dina Williams, Parents Anonymous in the Prisons, Tallahassee FL

Emma A. Winn, Project IM-PACT (SCI-Muncy), SCI-Muncy PA

Caryl Wolff, The Visitors Center at Attica, Attica NY

Rev. Barbara Young, Rochester Interfaith Jail Ministry, Lima NY

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F. "Skip" Mullaney, Consultant, Charlottesville VA

Federal Probation, March 1979

Inmate-Family Ties: Desirable but Difficult

BY EVA LEE HOMER*

SEVERAL previous articles in this journal have discussed the problems of the families of prisoners. One dealt with certain problems which occur due to the "loss" of the husband-father; another dealt with measures to alleviate some of the problems.

Why should criminal justice personnel concern themselves with the families of prisoners? While we can muster verbal sympathy for them as the "second victims of crime," the number and complexity of problems inherent and germane to our criminal justice system already appear overwhelming and insoluble. Why not let the social

workers concern themselves with the prisoner's family? Instead of viewing the prisoner's family as one more problem, perhaps we can further the common, frustrating goal of rehabilitation by understanding the role the prisoner's family can fill as one of the most potent and practical tools we have available in the prisoner/criminal rehabilitation effort.

In their study "Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships," Norman Holt and Donald Miller show a significant difference in the recidivism rate of prisoners who have had regular, continuing visits from family members as compared to those who did not have visitors or had only sporadic visits. The recidivism rate among those

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prisoners with regular family visitors was lower than any other group. Of the men studied, 70 percent of those with 3 or more continuing visitors experienced no parole difficulty, i.e., they were not rearrested. Those with no visitors were six times more likely to re-enter prison during the first year of parole as those with three or more visitors.

In general, the men with a greater number of visitors tended to have more successful parole than those with fewer visitors. Only 2 percent of those with 3 or more regular visitors had to be sent back to prison while on parole.

Further, it appears that strong social ties between an inmate, his family and friends are remarkably resistant to the expected eroding influences of time spent in prison. Holt and Miller's study found that after 4 years of incarceration, inmates had "... at least as many social contacts as those just beginning their prison terms."¹ The only exception to this finding was in the visiting patterns of "wives." Visits from legal wives tended to decrease during the second year of a first-time incarceration; about 25 percent fewer wives were still visiting after 3 or more years. In other words, 75 percent of the wives were still visiting regularly after 3 or more years of incarceration! In fact, "The contacts were about as frequent after several years of incarceration as during the first six months."² Holt and Miller were surprised to find this large "hard core" of wives maintaining their same frequency of visiting over 4 or more years and on into second and third prison terms. Legally married inmates averaged 3 or 4 visits per year from parents, siblings, relatives and male friends; they averaged 24 visits per year from their wives. One in four was visited by his wife every week. Those who had been living in common-law marriages averaged 3 or 4 visits per year from their "spouses." Eighty percent of those who had lived in common-law relationships were not getting visits from their "wives."

When these findings based on visiting patterns were compared to other variables usually associated with predicting parole success, results were most interesting. Even the most highly regarded parole success indicators were not found to affect

parole success as much as having a family to go home to. For those men who received 2 or more regular visitors, the amount of their release money was not associated with parole outcome. Even "having a job waiting" did not affect parole success as much as regular visits. "Given the same number of visitors," Holt and Miller point out, "those with no jobs were as likely to have clear parole records the first year as those with a job waiting for them."

Several studies have indicated that place of residence is associated with parole outcome. Usually, the findings are that men who live alone after release are the most likely to recidivate while those living with parents or wives are significantly less likely to violate parole. Generally, those inmates released to reside with parents or wives exhibit the least parole difficulty; a greater amount of difficulty is associated with living alone, living with siblings and living with others, in that order.

The value to society of maintaining strong prisoner-family relationships can be seen in all categorical measures. In every comparison category, including those with 3 or more prior commitments, men with more family-social ties have had the fewest parole failures. Even first termers with few family-social ties are more likely to recidivate than those with extensive family-social ties.

The reliability of Holt and Miller's findings is substantiated by the results of other research. The earliest of these efforts was constructed by Lloyd Ohlin in the course of developing a parole success prediction scale for the state of Illinois. Ohlin developed an "index of family interest" to study the belief of many parole agents that parolees with closer family ties tended to do better on parole. Using a sample of releases from 1925 to 1935, he found that 75 percent of the inmates classified as maintaining "active family interest" while in prison were successful on parole while only 34 percent of those considered loners experienced parole success.

Using Ohlin's classification system, Glaser studied a sample of 1956 releases from Federal prisons with very similar results. He found 71 percent of the "active family interest" group were successful on parole compared with only 50 percent of the "no contact with relatives" group.⁵

In an earlier study of 1940-49 releases from a reformatory type branch of the Illinois State Penitentiary, Glaser had found a 74 percent pa-

¹ Holt, N. and Miller, D., *Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships*, California Dept. of Corrections, Report No. 46, Jan. 1972.

² *Ibid.* p. 63.

³ *Ibid.* p. 43.

⁴ Ohlin, L., "The Stability and Validity of Parole Experience Tables," Ph.D. dissertation, Univ. of Chicago, 1954.

⁵ Glaser, D., *The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System*, Bobbs-Merrill, Inc. New York, 1964.

role success for the "active family interest" group and a 43 percent rate for those parolees without in-prison family contacts.⁶

Holt and Miller questioned their own findings in terms of the motivation of the individual inmate. If "differential motivation" were an explanation of parole success, it would have shown up in some of the other areas they compared. However, this proved not to be the case. "Those who maintained frequent family contacts received about as many disciplinary reports, had no better work records, were no more likely to participate in treatment programs, and did about the same in group counseling. In summary, all the evidence suggests that there is a strong, independent positive relationship between maintaining frequent family contacts while in prison and success on parole."⁷

The convergence of these studies, the consensus of findings, should be emphasized. The strong positive relationship between strength of family-social bonds and parole success has held up for more than 50 years, across very diverse offender populations and in different locales. It is doubtful if there is any other research finding in the field of corrections which can come close to this record.

Despite such conclusive evidence as to the value of a prisoner's close ties with family as a powerful and reliable rehabilitative tool, the problems of the family, and particularly those problems which militate against the family keeping close supportive ties with its imprisoned member, are largely ignored.

Mary Schwartz and Judith Weintraub have assessed the immediate impact of a husband's incarceration on the wife. They conclude it is quite similar to loss by death. There is grief and fear; he is gone, he is not there to help with any of the problems of the family's life. Yet the feelings and reactions are more complicated than those which follow death. In addition to grief and fear, there is also shame, anger and confusion. How will they manage? What should she tell the children? How will she and the children be treated in the community?⁸

Vincent H. was sent to state prison for 15 years, convicted of armed robbery. After 3 years, he had achieved residence in the honor unit. The

aura is that of a college dormitory, complete with pool tables, color TV, private and semiprivate rooms. The unit even has a parakeet for a mascot. Vincent H. was described by a reporter as "a man who looks like a camp counselor in his blue prison jumpsuit and white sneakers." He is an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous, attends church services every week and helped start up group therapy sessions. He has received a graduation diploma from welding school and successfully completed a Dale Carnegie course on "How to Win Friends and Influence People." So Vincent's life proceeds, inside the confines of the state prison to which he was sentenced to pay for his crimes.

Mildred H. is Vincent's wife. She sleeps on a thin floor mattress with her 9 year old son, Mike. Her daughter, Debbie, age 7, was born with water on the brain and paralyzed legs. She sleeps on the couch. They live in a one room house. Mildred H. has no telephone, no savings, few friends to count on and no leisure time. Up at 5:15 each morning, she takes the children to the baby sitter and gets to her job by 7:20 A.M. She earns \$240 a month, hemming 1,020 pairs of trousers each day. After work she gets the children from the babysitter and returns to their one room, \$88 a month house. Mildred makes dinner, gives baths, does the laundry by hand and gets to bed by 10 P.M. The only social service aid she receives is Medicaid for Debbie who has had 10 operations so far. Mildred has stopped going to church. There are no programs to broaden her horizons, no facilities to lighten her load or soften her reality.

"She's just wore out," says Vincent, "... She's hanging on by shoe strings now, ... I don't know how she's doing it ... I'm afraid she'll fall apart. I'm the one who's supposed to pay, not Mildred and the kids."⁹

Mark Luttrell, Commissioner of Corrections in Tennessee, has said, "Tremendous interest has been shown lately in the man behind bars, but there is very little interest in his family."¹⁰ Although prison wardens often admit the need for family programs, no help is offered to wives and children of inmates. "Sometimes their needs are as simple as a ride to the prison or just someone to talk to."¹¹ Often the problems are deep and the needs complex. It is not unusual for the children of prisoners to be put in foster homes and orphanages.

At the 32 major Federal institutions, incarcerating some 23,000 inmates, there are no family

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 366.

⁷ Holt & Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁸ Schwartz, M. and Weintraub, J., "The Prisoner's Wife: A Study in Crisis," *FEDERAL PROBATION*, March 1974.

⁹ Source: "Families Do The Hardest Time," from an AP report in *The Candle*, Correctional Program News, Feb. 1975. (published by Lewis Univ. Special Services Center, Chicago.)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

programs, according to Larry Taylor, the executive assistant to the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. "We don't have the funds to hire social workers to aid with transportation to the prisons. Right now, there are so many problems in our correction system, that if we did get additional funds, we'd probably use them on a higher priority item, like overcrowding," he has said. Mr. Taylor adds, "Private groups are encouraged to help prisoner's families, but there aren't very many groups and it's a hit-or-miss proposition."¹²

Since family prison visits have been shown to have a high correlation with parole success, what are the problems which hinder or prevent regular family visits?

While the largest urban areas in each state provide by far the largest source of inmate populations, even the newest prisons have been built in rural locations, at great distances from the large cities. Often these facilities cannot be reached by public transportation. William Nagel tells us that in examining 23 of the newest state prisons (all built after 1967), he found the average distance between the prison and the state's largest city to be 172 road miles. The smallest distance was 30 road miles, the greatest 450 road miles.

The situation with the Federal men's prisons is even worse. It is not at all uncommon for a prisoner to be confined 500 to 1,000 miles from his family.

The visiting situation for women prisoners is far worse than for men. Most states have only one facility for women. Some states have no facilities at all for women so they are "boarded" in the women's penitentiary in an adjacent state. The situation for Federal female prisoners is worst of all:

The overwhelming majority of Federal women prisoners . . . are confined in the Federal Reformatory for Women at Alderson, West Virginia. That part of southern West Virginia is breathtakingly beautiful, but extraordinarily isolated and extremely difficult to reach by highway, air or train.¹³

Women prisoners are further degraded and denied reinforcing family contacts by the policy in some states that babies delivered in prison are considered "court property."¹⁴ These babies are

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Nagel, Wm., *The New Red Barn: A Critical Look at the Modern American Prison*. Published for The American Foundation, Inc., Institute of Corrections, Phila., Pa. by Walker & Co., New York, 1973.

¹⁴ Burkhardt, K., "Women's Prisons Fail Us All." *The YWCA* magazine, Feb. 1972, pp. 22-24 & 34.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶ Goffman, E., *Asylums*. Anchor Books: Garden City, N.Y. 1961.

disposed of by the local welfare department; the mother of the infant has no rights to her newborn, no choice in the matter.

In some prisons, only the English language may be spoken, read and written. The major reason for this rule, where it exists, has been a lack of censors fluent in Spanish. Yet it means that inmates who speak only Spanish—or any language other than English—cannot talk during visits nor send and receive letters.¹⁵

Some prisons insist that for an initial period of time, usually several weeks after a prisoner enters the institution, he is held virtually "incommunicado" from the outside world. He is not permitted to have visitors nor to send or receive mail. The official reasoning behind this policy is to "wean" the prisoner from the outside world so he will become amenable to the structure and rules of the prison more quickly.¹⁶

It is not uncommon for a prisoner's family to be totally ignorant as to his whereabouts, and unable to get any information, for 3 or 4 weeks after sentencing. Is it necessary to submit the prisoner's family to this additional burden of worry? It is much to the credit of organizations like the Prison Reform Task Force in New York City that case workers will take the time to navigate the administrative red tape to find out where a prisoner is incarcerated and what the visiting and mail regulations are.

If the wife and children of a prisoner should be forced to turn to Welfare to remain alive and maintain themselves as a family unit, even one visit a year to a distant prison may be a financial impossibility. For example, one round trip to Attica State Prison from New York City, using the lowest priced public transportation available, cost \$63.45 in 1975. The New York City Welfare allotment for a "single" adult, in 1975, was \$36.00 a week. The cost of the trip to Attica—figured on transportation costs only—is therefore 176.25 percent of the wife or mother's total weekly income. Since one must pay for rent, utilities and food, and since welfare allotments are based on subsistence levels, the study hypothesized that with determination, it would be possible to save 5 percent of the welfare allotment towards a visit to a husband or son confined in Attica. At this 5 percent rate, it would take 36 weeks to save the \$63.45 required for the trip; in other words, only one visit per year is possible!

While Attica is the most expensive state prison to reach from New York City, the cost factors

for reaching any New York State prison from New York City militate against family visits. Based on the welfare level budget for a wife alone and the 5 percent possible savings, one family member could visit Clinton only once a year; Auburn, Comstock or Elmira twice; Napanack 3 times; or Green Haven 5 times; not a very hopeful picture for maintaining family ties through regular visits.¹⁷

These are some of the immediate, direct and short range (if one can consider 15 years as short range) problems imposed on the innocent family members of a prisoner. What is the ripple effect, the long range effect of incarceration on a prisoner's family?

As previously mentioned, the children of prisoners often wind up in orphanages, foster homes and institutions. Imprisonment of a father brings economic hardship, new roles, changed relationships and stigma to his family.¹⁸ Emotional frustration due to incarceration of a family member has been shown to cause significant overall changes for the worse in families studies.¹⁹ Prolonged imprisonment sometimes leads to very marked deterioration of family ties.²⁰

Although reaction of families to this enforced separation varies, there is a demoralization to the wife and children when the separation is due to imprisonment that is not present in any other form of separation, not even death.²¹

A 1965 study indicates strongly that committing a father to jail quickly and significantly

lowers the school performance of his acknowledged children. Based on the data, three additional conclusions were reached in this study.

(1) The sons of jail inmates are rated below average in the school world on important social and psychological scales more frequently than are comparable controls.

(2) While some sons of prisoners are rated above average, they are far outranked by comparable controls.

(3) The same statements apply to daughters but the differences are even greater between daughters of prisoners and other girls with whom they are compared.²²

While it has been shown that obstacles to economic and power status are most likely to lead boys into juvenile delinquency,²³ two decades of research have produced evidence that female delinquency is largely attributable to deficient family relationships, particularly to broken homes.²⁴ Delinquent girls come from broken homes even more often than delinquent boys.²⁵

While white boys have much higher arrest rates than white girls, there is less discrepancy among black juveniles. This discrepant sex ratio is believed attributable to the greater incidence of family instability among blacks.²⁶

It has been known that family disorganization is a major causative factor in offenses against the family, e.g., truancy, ungovernability and running away.²⁷ These three constitute the largest proportion of "delinquencies" committed by females; they are over two-thirds of the "public policy offenses" for which females are charged. Too often these offenses lead to prostitution and other more serious offenses and difficulties.²⁸ Sixty eight percent of females referred to juvenile court for ungovernability and running away are from broken, unstable homes as are 52 percent of females who commit offenses against the person.²⁹

More than half of the male juveniles charged with running away and ungovernability, as well as those charged with offenses against the person, come from broken homes. Eighty-nine percent of black male children referred to court by someone in their home for being ungovernable or running away are from broken, unstable homes. Sixty-seven percent of black male juveniles who commit crimes against the person are from incomplete homes.³⁰

It has been suggested that a basic cause of delinquency is built up hostility in youths whose basic human needs are not satisfied. Growing up

¹⁷ Homer, E. "Study of the Comparative Costs of Visiting Certain New York State Prisons from New York City on a Welfare-Level Budget." Unpublished. John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, 1975.

¹⁸ (a) Anderson, N. "Prisoner's Families—A Study of Family Crisis." Australia, 1966 (available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.). (b) Schwartz & Weintraub, op. cit.

¹⁹ Schneller, D.P. "Exploratory Study of the Effects of Incarceration on the Families of Negro Inmates of a Medium Security Prison." Unpublished Dissertation. (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.).

²⁰ (a) Holt & Miller, op. cit. (b) Nagel, op. cit. (c) Burkhardt, op. cit.

²¹ (a) Schwartz & Weintraub, op. cit. (b) Blackwell, J.E. "Effects of Involuntary Separation on Selected Families of Men Committed to Prison from Spokane, Washington." 1969 Unpublished Dissertation. (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.).

²² Friedman, S. & Esselstyn, T. "Adjustment of Children to Jail Inmates." FEDERAL PROBATION, Dec. 1965, pp. 55-59.

²³ Morris, R. "Female Delinquency and Relational Problems." Social Forces, Oct. 1964, pp. 82-89.

²⁴ (a) Morris, op. cit. (b) Trese, L., *101 Delinquent Girls*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides, 1962. (c) Cockburn & MacLay, "Sex Differentials in Juvenile Delinquency." British Journal of Criminology, July 1965, pp. 289-308. (d) Adenick & Bager, "Familial Experience, Identification, and Female Delinquency." Social Focus, Spring 1969, pp. 37-62. (e) Cloninger & Guze, "Female Criminals: Their Personal, Familial and Social Backgrounds." Archives of General Psychiatry, Dec. 1970, pp. 554-58.

²⁵ Rodman, H. & Grams, P. "Juvenile Delinquency and the Family: A Review and Discussion." President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice; Task Force Report: Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime.

²⁶ Toby, J., "The Differential Impact of Family Disorganization." American Sociological Review, Oct. 1967, pp. 505-12.

²⁷ Weeks, H. "Male and Female Broken Home Rates by Types of Delinquency." American Sociological Review, Aug. 1940, pp. 601-05.

²⁸ New York Times, Feb. 16, 1976, p. 34.

²⁹ Datasman & Scarpiotti, "Female Delinquency and Broken Homes: A Re-Assessment." Criminology, May 1975, pp. 33-54.

³⁰ Rainwater, L. *Behind Ghetto Walls*. Chicago: Aldine, 1970.

in a disturbed family and home situations, they are totally engrossed in surviving in a hostile environment.³¹

Short range or long range, imprisonment of a central member has deleterious effects on all members of a family. Since the most important finding of Holt and Miller's comprehensive study is the strong, consistently positive relationship between parole success and the maintenance of strong family ties while in prison, it behooves us to try to eliminate institutional procedures and locations

which impede family visits. Wider use of early and partial release programs and facilitation of family visit programs have been suggested as possible remedies to the difficulties extant in maintaining desirable close family ties with a prisoner. Programs which help families, split by imprisonment, to continue to function as a viable family unit need to be encouraged. If we wantonly discard or disregard a major, proven rehabilitative tool, such as maintenance of regular family visits to our imprisoned population has shown itself to be, it appears to this author that we are, in effect, cutting off our noses to spite our collective face.

³¹ Hahn, P. *Linkup*. Dec. 1974, p. 9.

Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationships, Holt, N. and Miller, D., Research Division, Department of Corrections, State of California, January 1972, pgs 60-64.

CHAPTER VIII. THE INMATE AND HIS FAMILY: SOME CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Any serious look at the end results of correctional programs is likely to be discouraging. Immediately the investigator faces the problem of trying to define "correctional programs," as the term has become so broad as to include almost everything convicted criminals are required to do in the course of their imprisonment. A second difficulty is the virtual absence of any theoretical basis for the programs. After a review of current correctional techniques, Cressey concluded that not only had their effectiveness not been demonstrated but that the techniques were "only vaguely related to any reputable theory of behavior or of criminality."^{1/} Empey observed that most such programs, rather than being derived from theoretical constructs, are usually based on an "intuitive opportunism," involving a kind of goal-oriented guessing which develops into a strategy of activity.^{2/}

A third area of frustration involves the inability to find empirical evidence showing any significant value for the great majority of current techniques of correctional intervention.^{3/} Commenting on this lack of demonstrated effectiveness, Ward remarked:

"University investigators should find little comfort in the fact that while treatment evaluation results are not much to take to the legislature, the implications for the sociological and psychological theories underlying these programs are not much to take to their professional meetings. With the investment that all parties -- prison and parole departments, treatment specialists and theoreticians -- have in evaluations of correctional programs, there is no question that what would be helpful to all concerned, including the objects of treatment, would be the report of a prison treatment program that really worked."^{4/}

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- ^{1/} Cressey, D.R., "The Nature and Effectiveness of Correctional Techniques," Law and Contemporary Problems, Vol. 23, No. 4, Autumn 1958.
 - ^{2/} Empey, L.T., "A Strategy of Search," paper presented at the planning session of the Pacific Sociological Association on the Technical and Ethical Problems Involved in Evaluating Action Programs, Salt Lake City, April 1965.
 - ^{3/} Robison, J. and G. Smith, "The Effectiveness of Correctional Programs," Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 1971.
 - ^{4/} Ward, D.A., "Evaluation of Correctional Treatment: Some Implications of Negative Findings," paper read at the First National Symposium on Law Enforcement Science and Technology, Chicago, Illinois, March 1967.

At this point in our knowledge it seems fair to say that there are few correctional techniques whose proven value is such that their application would represent a significant improvement over doing nothing at all. To compound the difficulty most of these unproven techniques require high staff ratios or in other ways consume large amounts of scarce correctional resources. It is against this bleak backdrop that the implications for corrections of the findings of this study relating to inmate social ties will be discussed.

Do Family Contacts Increase Parole Success?

The central finding of this research is the discovery of a strong and consistently positive relationship between parole success and the maintenance of strong family ties while in prison. The reliability of this finding is substantiated by the results of other research undertakings. The earlier of these efforts was conducted by Lloyd Ohlin in the course of developing a parole success prediction scale for Illinois. Ohlin developed an index of family interest while in prison to capitalize on the belief of many parole agents that parolees with closer family ties tended to do better. Using a sample of releases from 1925-35, he found that 75% of the inmates classified as maintaining "active family interest" while in prison were successful on parole compared to only 34% for those regarded as loners.^{5/} Glaser used Ohlin's classification technique with a sample of 1956 releases from federal prisons with very similar results. He found that 71% of the "active family interest" group were successful compared to only 50% of the "no contact with relatives" group.^{6/} In an earlier study of 1940-49 releases from the Pontiac Branch of the Illinois State Penitentiary, which has a reformatory type population, Glaser found a 74% success rate for the "active interest" group and a 43% rate for those parolees without contacts.^{7/}

This study found very similar percentage differences between groups. Only 50% of the "no contact" inmates completed their first year on parole without being arrested, while 70% of those with three visitors were "arrest free" during this period. In addition the "loners" were six times more likely to be returned to prison during the first year (12% returned compared to 2% for those with three or more visitors).

The convergence of these studies should be emphasized. Ohlin's study focused on inmates paroled in Illinois over a ten-year period. Glaser's work replicated Ohlin's findings with releases during one year from federal prisons as well as from a reformatory type population. The same results characterize our study's sample of 1969-70 releases from a minimum security institution in California. The positive relationship between strength of social ties and success on parole has held up for 45 years of releases across very diverse offender populations and in different localities. It is doubtful if there is any other research finding in the field of corrections which can approximate this record.

^{5/} Ohlin, L.E., The Stability and Validity of Parole Experience Tables, (Ph.D. dissertation) University of Chicago, 1954, cited in Glaser, D., The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System, Bobbs-Merrill, Inc., New York, 1964, p. 366.

^{6/} Glaser, op. cit., p. 366.

^{7/} *ibid.*

One of the major problems with the earlier studies, which the authors of this study tried to overcome, was the strong interrelationship among social ties, other important variables, and parole outcome. The unique contributions of this study in this regard was to show the independent contribution of family ties to parole outcome. The importance of family ties held up in an analysis in which six other important factors were considered.

Glaser postulated that the amount of release money was important to parole outcome.^{8/} We found this to be true only for those with few social ties. Difficulty on parole is somewhat predictable if the inmate has few contacts and less money. On the other hand, strong social ties appear to serve as an alternative material resource. Among those with many visitors the amount of release money assumed no importance.

Among federal prisoners Glaser also found significant differences in parole outcome associated with differences in type of residence. However, similar differences in California largely disappeared when the number of social ties was held constant. There was not much difference in parole outcome among parolees planning different types of residences who received numerous visitors. The relationship didn't disappear entirely, however, since those parolees planning to live with parents or wives still had a slight advantage in parole success. For example, 8% of those who had two or more visitors and who were living alone on parole recidivated compared to 5% of their counterparts with plans to live with their parents or wives.

Similarly, employment prospects among federal prisoners were important to parole outcome, but with the imposition of a control for family contact, job offers were not important for the sample used in the present study. The importance of a job offer appeared to be primarily a function of the strength of the inmate's social ties. In other words, the presence of a job offer was unrelated to parole outcome when the inmate's social ties were taken into account, and the effects of social ties on parole success were independent of a job offer.

An alternative explanation of the findings of this study is that inmates receiving more visitors are less likely to recidivate anyway. In order to test this hypothesis, the authors divided the sample into three levels of predicted parole outcome and compared social ties and parole success within each. The predictive device was the California Base Expectancy Scale, which is based heavily on past criminal involvement. Within all Base Expectancy levels, it was found that those who maintained closer ties did better.

It might be claimed that, while other important variables were taken into account, inmates motivated to maintain strong social ties have some special motivation to succeed on parole. The same qualities which motivated the inmate to maintain frequent family contacts might have caused him to do better on parole. The data in Chapter V seem to invalidate this alternative explanation. If the results in parole outcome were caused by differential motivation, it would be necessary to hypothesize a somewhat generalized motivational difference. In other words, the difference in motivation ought to show up in other areas besides visiting and parole outcome. However, this was not the case. Those who maintained frequent family contacts received about as many disciplinary reports, had no better work records, were no more

^{8/} Glaser, op. cit., p. 316.

likely to participate in treatment programs, and did about the same in group counseling. In summary, all the evidence suggests that there is a strong independent, positive relationship between maintaining frequent family contacts while in prison and success on parole.

This evidence suggests that the inmate's family should be viewed as the prime treatment agent and family contacts as a major correctional technique. This approach has numerous advantages not the least of which is that it is free. It doesn't require the specially trained staff or costly staff augmentations so common to most treatment approaches.

A second major advantage is the built-in inmate motivation. Most treatment techniques, even if they work, have limited value because the inmates most in need are also the least motivated for treatment. The few who volunteer are often the same ones who would succeed without the program. The desire for outside contacts, by contrast, is a central part of the inmate's existence. The data in Chapter IV clearly show that when adequate opportunity is provided for contacts the inmate's social ties need not erode away. The contacts of our sample were about as frequent after several years of incarceration as during the first six months. The one important exception to this was that a significant number of wives stopped visiting during the second year. It is necessary to emphasize, however, that this study was done at a correctional complex which is located within easy commuting distance from where most of the inmates' families live and which has very liberal arrangements for visiting. It seems apparent that the further visitors have to travel and the more difficult the procedures for visiting, the more likely are the visitors to reduce contacts as the sentence is served.

Can Correctional Systems Help?

The next question is whether or not correctional systems can do anything to capitalize on the family's potential as a treatment agent. Chapter VII examined two experimental programs which aimed in this direction, the Family Visiting and the Temporary Release Programs. Both efforts are successful by almost any standard. Both enjoyed almost unanimous support from the inmate body. Almost all inmates hoped to participate, and those who couldn't were not resentful. Neither presented serious administrative problems. In addition, a follow-up study found that the participants in either program did better on parole than non-participants. Sixty percent of the participants experienced no difficulty during the first year of parole compared to only 42% of the non-participants. The number of participants was small, and the results must be interpreted with caution. However, the findings held up under the application of numerous control variables.

A final question about the temporary releases is whether they seriously threaten the public safety. Currently, thousands of inmates in California are being released each year on temporary leaves and experience has shown that they are involved in no more difficulty than would normally be expected during the first few days on parole.

Some Recommendations

There are two areas in which changes might increase correctional effectiveness through promoting strong family ties. First, there are several ways in which special programs could become more effective. More extensive use should be made of temporary releases. Their potential seems almost unlimited. Even with their rapidly expanding use in California, no limits have yet been found on who can benefit or the number of times benefit can be derived. The use of temporary releases as pre-release preparation should be extended to include the entire time of incarceration. Home leaves beginning a few months after reception would go a long way toward promoting strong family ties. Home visit privileges should be granted to a few non-violent, married prisoners in low risk categories on an experimental basis and slowly be extended to other groups.

The Family Visiting Program should be reserved strictly for those inmates who cannot make use of temporary releases. These would probably include such cases as chronic parole absconders, perpetrators of very violent crimes such as murder, or inmates who need to work out marital problems in a more structured setting than is provided by the home. Since common-law marriages are increasing in prevalence, those of some duration should be recognized in both programs.

Family counseling should be utilized more with each institution required to have at least one person certified as a family counselor who would be designated as a coordinator. This person would be available as a co-leader for family groups as well as a consultant to other staff. This individual's availability should be made known to visitors so as to encourage their consultation with him.

The second area concerns routine institutional procedures. Every effort must be made to place the inmate in the institution closest to his home in order to facilitate family contacts. This research has shown the high cost in terms of parole failure of hindering important social ties. Correctional systems can no longer afford the expense of incarcerating inmates in areas so remote from their home communities as to make visiting virtually impossible. Proximity to the home community should be the first consideration in making assignments to institutions.

All restrictions on visitors and mail should be closely scrutinized with the objective of eliminating all regulations which are not necessary to promoting the absolute basic security of the institution. No restriction should be allowed to remain whose only reason is the limit in space. Space must be found. If some new correctional technique were invented tomorrow whose effectiveness were equal to family contacts, there would be a rush to find space for implementation even if it meant using the warden's office. Wherever possible visitors should be allowed to bring a lunch and share it with the inmate. This avoids terminating the visit for the meal and also provides for visiting in a setting focused on a central family ritual. There are undoubtedly many other ways in which family contacts could be promoted.

RESEARCH ON FAMILY REUNION PROGRAM OF
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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This article summarizes the Department's continuing research on the Family Reunion Program with particular emphasis on the recent recidivism study of program participants.

Description of Family Reunion Program

One of the major programmatic initiatives of the New York State Department of Correctional Services has been the establishment of the Family Reunion Program. Under the direction of the Commissioner Thomas A. Coughlin III, this program is currently operating at ten sites serving twelve correctional facilities.

Program Objectives

The basic objective of the Family Reunion Program is to enable eligible inmates and their families to meet in private on the grounds of the facility for extended periods of time. The Family Reunion Program is designed to accommodate those inmates who, because of length of sentence or other reasons, are ineligible for participation in the regular furlough program.

The Family Reunion Program addresses two interrelated major goals. Its primary goal is to enable the inmates to preserve and strengthen their family relationships while incarcerated. A second goal is to facilitate the adjustment of the involved inmates in the community after their release by improving family relationships and thus reducing the probability of further criminal activity.

Program Operation

Under the Department's Assistant Commissioner for Ministerial and Family Services (Reverend Dr. Earl Moore), the Division of Ministerial and Family Services has the day-to-day operational responsibility for the implementation and operation of the Family Reunion Program.

This program was initially established under a Federal grant on a pilot project basis at the Walkill Correctional Facility in June 1976. Based on the successful operation of this demonstration project, the Federal grant was incrementally supplemented to include Attica (July 1977); Bedford Hills (September 1977); and Great Meadow (September 1978). The program was subsequently assumed under State funding at the end of the Federal grant. It has since been further expanded to additional facilities under State funding--Eastern (October 1980); Green Haven (November 1980); Auburn (November 1980); Clinton and Clinton Annex (January 1982); and Fishkill (July 1982). The Fishkill program also serves Downstate inmates; the Bedford Hills site likewise serves Taconic inmates.

Description of Program Policies and Procedures

The forthcoming Family and Corrections Network anthology on institutional programs will provide a summary description of this program's policies and operating procedures for the interested reader.

RESEARCH ON FAMILY REUNION PROGRAM

Due to the innovative nature of this program, the Department's Division of Ministerial and Family Services and the Division of Program Planning, Research and Evaluation have collaborated on an ongoing series of research projects on the Family Reunion Program. The results of this research series are summarized in the following section. (The appended references section provides the full cites for these reports as well as subsequent articles.)

1. Preservation of Family Ties: Number of Program Participants Living with Family Members Upon Release. An initial survey in this area (February 1979) sought to assess the degree to which the Family Reunion Program at Walkill assisted inmates in maintaining family ties.

In order to ascertain the program's assistance in enabling inmates to maintain and strengthen their family ties while incarcerated, information was compiled on the number of program participants who were released to living arrangements with family members.

This 1979 survey found that 58 (87%) of the 67 released program participants for whom information was available were scheduled to return to living arrangements with family members (generally their spouses) upon release. Another seven program participants were initially released to a special halfway house program operated by the Division of Parole. Only two were scheduled to reside alone after release.

In view of the fact that 62 of these 73 program participants had served over 2 years, this finding is seen to be indicative of the program's contribution in assisting inmates in maintaining family ties during substantial periods of incarceration.

2. Impact of Family Reunion Program on Inmate Discipline. Although it is generally accepted that the primary purpose of prison programs is to assist offenders in preparing for return to society, correctional administrators frequently believe that programs also serves an institutional control function.

Institutional programs are commonly seen to assert a positive influence on inmate discipline in two principal ways. Inmates with few or no disciplinary infractions may be encouraged to continue this behavior due to their desire to participate in a program which requires a good disciplinary record. Conversely, inmates with poor disciplinary records may be encouraged to change their behavior in order to participate in this program.

In view of the importance of this issue in correctional program administration, a 1981 study examined the possible impact of the program on the behavior of inmates who were initially disapproved for program participation due to poor disciplinary records.

This survey sample consisted of 55 inmates at three maximum security facilities (Auburn, Green Haven, and Eastern) who were initially disapproved for the program due solely to poor disciplinary records and who remained at the project sites for the follow-up period (approximately 8 months).

This survey found that 65% (36) of these 55 offenders were subsequently approved for program participation due to improved disciplinary records. Another 4% (2) had applications pending at the conclusion of the study.

This finding may be seen to be especially noteworthy since nearly all of these cases had prior histories of numerous, as well as serious, disciplinary infractions.

The findings of this research suggests that the Family Reunion Program may have a positive influence on improving the behavior of a considerable percentage of potential program participants who are initially disapproved due to disciplinary reasons.

RECIDIVISM RESEARCH

In 1986, a recidivism study was initiated at the request of the Assistant Commissioner for Ministerial and Family Services to update and expand the previous (1980) follow-up research on the Family Reunion Program. The current research was designed to both (a) involve a broader sample of program participants drawn from the significantly expanded number of program sites and (b) track these program participants for longer follow-up periods than previously possible.

Sampling and Follow-Up Procedure. To generate a sample of similar cases, this survey selected the first 50 inmates who participated at eight male facility program sites in 1982. (Due to the differences in the return rates of male and female offenders, a separate report on the Bedford Hills program will be issued at a later date.) Of these 400 male program participants, 204 had been released as of December 31, 1984. This cut-off date for releases was used to insure a follow-up period of at least 12 months, which is the standard policy in Department recidivism research.

Development of Projected Return Rate for Comparison Purposes. For general comparison purposes, the average return rate of Department releases is used in Department recidivism studies. The projected return rates of program participants in various programs are computed based on this overall return rate.

This approach permits a comparison of the actual return rate of the participant groups to their projected return rates based on the Department's overall return rate. Using the average return rate of all Department releases from 1972 through 1980, a projected return rate can be developed for the satisfactory program participants based on the number of months since their release.

Using this method, it can be projected that 54 (26.5%) of the 204 program participants would have been returned by December 1985.

Comparison of Actual and Projected Return Rates. The actual return rate of the program participants (19.6%) was considerably lower than their projected return rate based on the Department's overall release population (26.5%).

	<u>Projected Return Rate</u>		<u>Actual Return Rate</u>	
	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Program Participants	54	26.5%	40	19.6%

IMPLICATIONS OF RECIDIVISM RESEARCH

In view of this finding of a lower than projected return rate among Family Reunion Program participants, a number of questions may be logically asked about the significance and implications of this positive finding.

Question of Selectivity in Choosing Program Participants for the Family Reunion Program. A basic comment can be made that Family Reunion Program participants are carefully selected and thus it could be expected that they should have a lower return rate than the overall release population.

The Family Reunion Program participants are selected following a multi-phase screening process that involves a number of criteria. Certainly not the least important of these criteria is that the inmate must necessarily have family members willing to visit him or her, which indicates a certain degree of family cohesion. As such, it may be rightly pointed out that the surveyed Family Reunion Program participants may not be a representative sample of the inmate population, particularly with respect to family ties.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the possible existence of this self-selection bias does not logically lead to the conclusion that the provision of the Family Reunion Program to these offenders is unnecessary or uneconomical. On the contrary, it may be argued that it is the appropriate correctional policy to offer such individuals with opportunity to maximize their potential for successful reintegration into the community.

In light of these considerations, this research was designed to analyze the relation of Family Reunion Program participation and post-release recidivism without attempting to attribute any observed differences wholly to the impact of the program. As such, the lower return rate of the sample of program participants may be jointly attributed to the offenders' motivation, family ties, and the impact of the program.

Conclusion. In conclusion, these research considerations caution against any definitive conclusions concerning the impact of the Family Reunion Program. However, the consistent findings of this report and the earlier research do suggest the Family Reunion Program does serve to maintain family ties, which in turn appears to reduce the likelihood of post-release criminal behavior.

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Donald Macdonald, NYS DOCS, 1979.

Follow-Up Survey of Post-Release Criminal Behavior of Participants in Family Reunion Program; Donald Macdonald with Programming Assistance of David Kelly, NYS DOCS, 1980.

These two reports were highlighted in an August 1982 article in Corrections Today by James Howser and Donald Macdonald entitled, "Maintaining Family Ties."

The Family Reunion Program's Impact on Discipline; Jody Grossman, NYS DOCS, 1981.

This research was highlighted in an article in the Journal of Offender Counseling, Services and Rehabilitation; James Howser, Jody Grossman, and Donald Macdonald entitled, "Impact of Family Reunion Program on Institutional Discipline." Fall/Winter 1983.

Follow-Up Study of Sample of Family Reunion Program Participants. Donald Macdonald and Gerald Bala, NYS DOCS, 1986.

REQUEST FOR COPIES OF RESEARCH ON FAMILY REUNION PROGRAM

The Department of Correctional Services welcomes requests for copies of its research on the Family Reunion Program. Requests may be forwarded to the New York State Department of Correctional Services, State Office Building Campus, Building 2, Albany, New York, 12226.

**The Effect of Community Reintegration on Rates
of Recidivism: A Statistical Overview of
Data for the Years 1971 Through 1982**

Prepared by Daniel P. LeClair, PhD, Deputy Director of Research,
Massachusetts Department of Correction, February, 1985

The Research Division of the Massachusetts Department of Correction's routinely collects and publishes on an annual basis data on rates of recidivism. In these reports a series of descriptive variables on all individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions is correlated with rates of recidivism. Comparisons between current findings and trends discerned in prior studies are made. Additionally, comparisons between specific correctional institutions of varying security levels and comparisons between varying modes of correctional programming are also made. The state correctional institutions include maximum, medium and minimum security facilities as well as state run prerelease centers and sub-contracted privately operated halfway houses. From these studies data are currently available for the releasee cohorts for the years 1971 through 1982. This report attempts to draw together data generated from the recidivism studies of the past 12 years and to present a summary statistical overview of the findings.

The annual statistical monitoring of recidivism data since the year 1971 has led to the detection of a number of significant trends occurring within the Massachusetts correctional system. Dominant among these trends was the occurrence of a systematic reduction in the recidivism rates from 1971 through to 1978. For example, in the year 1971 the recidivism rate for the combined population of state prison releases was 25%; in 1973 it had dropped to 19%; and in 1976 it had dropped to 16%. By 1977, the recidivism rate was 15%. More recent data, however, reveal that a reversal has occurred in this

historical trend. The 1979 and 1980 releasee populations represent the first statistically significant increase in recidivism rates in a nine year period. However, there has been a modest drop, as indicated by the 1981 and 1982 data.

A second major trend concerned the home furlough program in the Massachusetts correctional system, a program begun in, and expanded subsequent to, the year 1971. Recidivism studies demonstrated that inmate participation in the furlough program may be an important variable in accounting for the systematic reduction in recidivism rates occurring in Massachusetts. The data revealed that those individuals who had experienced a furlough prior to release from prison had significantly lower rates of recidivism than did individuals who had not experienced a furlough prior to release. When selection factors were controlled, the relationship remained positive. This trend continued in a consistent pattern for the ten successive years for which data were available.

Recidivism studies have also revealed that participation in prerelease programs prior to community release leads to reduced rates of recidivism. Again, when selection factors were controlled the relationship remained constant.

A final documented trend that has emerged from the recidivism studies focused on the process of graduated movement among institutions in descending level of security and size. Analyses revealed that individuals released from prison directly from medium or minimum security institutions (including prerelease centers and halfway houses) had significantly lower rates of recidivism than did individuals released directly from a maximum security institution. Again, this relationship held even when selection factors were controlled.

When follow-up periods were extended from one to two and then to five years, the above findings with respect to furloughs, prerelease centers, and security level of releasing institution remained constant.

The major findings of the research were collectively interpreted as evidence of a positive effect of the reintegrative community based correctional programming. That is, correctional programs operating in the Massachusetts

system which are geared to maintain, to establish, or to re-establish general societal links such as family, economic, political, and social roles may be associated with a subsequent reduction in recidivism. Also associated with the reduction in recidivism is the graduated societal reintroduction of the offender. This is accomplished through a series of movements among institutions in descending levels of security and size along with the awarding of increased increments of community contacts through participation in furloughs, education release, and work release programs.

The above conclusions hold even with the recently documented trend of increased recidivism. Despite the overall increase in recidivism, participation in reintegration programs remains associated with lower rates of recidivism.¹

¹A bibliography of the research data referred to in this summary is presented at the end of this report.

IMPACT OF TRAVEL DISTANCE ON VISITING

As the distance to be travelled by a prison visitor increases, the frequency of visiting decreases.

"Visitors surveys obtained from the Department of Corrections for three institutions in the State of Washington do not allow precise calculations of visitor frequencies by origin. However, they do clearly indicate a distance decay effect on visitation. That is, visits to facilities from far away counties are consistently lower than expected based solely on the percentages of prisoners originating from those counties. Prison assignment policies and the relocation of families are insufficient to account for these distance decay effects."

Leon, B., "Accessibility Issues in Prison Location," FCN Working Papers #8, September, 1985, p. 77, Family and Corrections Network, P. O. Box 2103, Waynesboro, VA 22980

"The factors which most often determined the frequency of visits were the preincarceration placement of the child ... and the distance from the facility, with increasing mileage having an inverse relation to frequency of visits."

Koban, L. A., "Parents in Prison: the comparative analysis of the effects of incarceration on the families of men and women," Research in Law, Deviance and Social Control, Vol. 5, 1983, p. 180, JAI Press, Inc.

"The most frequently given reasons for not having special visits revolved around problems in transportation or distance from the child's placement to the institution."

Baunash, P. J., Mothers in Prison, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1985, p. 93.

"There also appears to be a strong correlation, as suggested earlier, between number of visits and distance from the institution. Over fifty percent of those respondents who reported they visit less often stated they are limited in their visiting based upon the distance they must travel. Many of these individuals reported that they previously were able to obtain rides to and from the institution with family and friends of other inmates, but when their inmate was transferred to a more distant facility, this mode of transportation was no longer available."

Long-term Offenders in the Pennsylvania System, Buchanan, R., et al, Sept., 1983, p. 92-3. Correctional Services Group, 4149 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64111-3065

Briefing data prepared by Jim Mustin, Academy for Staff Development, Virginia Department of Corrections, PO Box 2215, Waynesboro, VA 22980.

PRISON VISITING AND PAROLE SUCCESS

There is a positive correlation between prison visiting and parole success.

"The central finding of this research is the strong and consistent positive relationship that exists between parole success and maintaining strong family ties while in prison.

Only 50 percent of the "no contact" inmates completed their first year on parole without being arrested, while 70 percent of those with three visitors were "arrest free" during this period. In addition, the "loners" were six times more likely to wind up back in prison during the first year (12 percent returned compared to 2 percent for those with three or more visitors)."

Holt, N., Miller, D., Explorations in Inmate-Family Relationship, Research Division, Department of Corrections, State of California, January, 1972, p. v.

"The convergence of these studies should be emphasized. Ohlin's study focused on inmates paroled in Illinois over a ten-year period. Glaser's work replicated Ohlin's findings with releases during one year from federal prisons as well as from a reformatory type population. The same results characterize our study's sample of 1969-70 releases from a minimum security institution in California. The positive relationship between strength of social ties and success on parole has held up for 45 years of releases across very diverse offender populations and in different localities. It is doubtful if there is any other research finding in the field of corrections which can approximate this record."

Holt, Miller, p. 61

"In summary, all the evidence suggests there is a strong independent, positive relationship between maintaining frequent family contacts while in prison and success on parole."

Long-term Offenders in the Pennsylvania Correctional System, Buchanan, R. et al., September 1983, Correctional Services Group, 4149 Pennsylvania Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64111-3065. p. 91.

Briefing data prepared by Jim Mustin, Academy for Staff Development, Virginia Department of Corrections, PO Box 2215, Waynesboro, VA 22980.

Table 7
 Recidivism by Marital Status

	<u>Unmarried</u>		<u>Married</u>	
	(N)	(Pct)	(N)	(Pct)
Non-Recidivists	359	69.7	107	81.7
Recidivists	156	30.3	24	18.3
TOTAL	515	100.0	131	100.0

Chi square = 7.446, 1 df, $p \leq .01$

Due to small numbers of cases in several cells, categories of marital status were collapsed into unmarried versus married (See Table 7). Again, a statistically significant difference in recidivism rates is observed, 30.3% for unmarried versus 18.3% for married men. The odds of such a large difference occurring by chance alone are one in one hundred.

"Recidivism Among FY78-79 Adult Male Releases," Research and Planning Section, Department of Correctional Services, State of Nebraska, January 1983.

Recidivism Rates for N.C. Inmates Released in the 1st Half of 1979
and a Comparison With Earlier Periods

Followup Period: Number of Months After Release:	% Returned to Prison During the First:				
	<u>6 mo.</u>	<u>12 mo.</u>	<u>18 mo.</u>	<u>24 mo.</u>	<u>36 mo.</u>
<u>Category of Inmate</u>					
All Releases	7.0	14.8	21.1	26.2	31.6
Female Releases	6.1	8.7	12.1	15.6	22.5
Age Less Than 18 Years	10.2	24.4	33.7	38.5	42.4
Age Between 18 and 21 Years	9.8	18.8	26.2	31.9	37.6
Age Between 21 and 30 Years	6.0	13.6	20.8	26.6	31.9
Age Over 30 Years	6.5	13.1	17.3	21.3	26.8
No Prior Prison Convictions	4.5	10.7	15.6	20.3	24.8
One or Two Priors	8.8	17.2	25.5	30.6	37.1
Three or More Priors	11.6	23.2	30.3	36.4	42.7
Married Releases	4.5	10.6	16.4	20.7	25.0
Unmarried Releases	8.0	16.5	22.9	28.3	34.1
High Risk ¹ Releases	22.6	37.1	48.4	51.6	61.3
Low Risk ² Releases	0	1.3	5.3	8.0	12.8
Releases in 1975	6.6	13.3	18.5	23.2	28.5
<u>Releases in 1968</u>	15.7	23.5	29.0	33.2	38.2

¹High Risk Releases are those who were unmarried with one or more rule violations and prior prison convictions; were under 21 years of age; had less than 10 years schooling; and whose crime was not assaultive.

²Low Risk Releases are those who were married; had no rule violations or prior prison convictions; were over 25 years old; and had at least 12 years of education. (There was no restriction on crime type for this group.)

RESEARCH BULLETIN, N.C. Department of Correction, Office of Research and Planning, Ken Parker, Manager, Issue # 12, March 24, 1983.

Many offenders have backgrounds that include a turbulent home life, lack of family ties, and poor education

Knowing about offenders' backgrounds tells us about their lives, not necessarily why they committed crime

While turbulent home life, lack of family ties, and poor education are frequently present in the backgrounds of offenders, these factors may or may not contribute to crime. Some theories suggest that some of these factors are symptoms of maladjustment as is criminal behavior. Clearly, most persons who share these factors in their backgrounds are not criminals.

A high number of offenders come from unstable homes

Research shows a higher incidence of unstable homes among delinquents than among nondelinquents. State prison inmates were more likely than not to have grown up in a home with only one parent present or to have been raised by relatives. Forty-seven percent of all inmates grew up in a two-parent household; in contrast, 77% of all children under age 18 in 1979 were living with two-parent families.

Because criminal careers typically begin at a young age, the identification of characteristics that distinguish delinquents from nondelinquents has been given considerable attention and has focused largely on what researchers term "under the roof culture"—the interactions of love, discipline, and supervision that occur between parents and children in the home.¹⁰

Violent behavior is linked to abuse as children and to neurological abnormalities

Violent behavior and physical and psychological abnormalities often appear among children and adolescents subjected to extreme abuse and violence in their families. Lewis and others in a study comparing an extremely violent group of delinquent boys with a group of less violent delinquent boys found striking psychological and neurological differences between the two groups. The more violent group exhibited a wide range of neurological abnormalities, were significantly more likely to have paranoid symptoms, and were more

likely to have suffered and to have witnessed physical abuse. They also had far more severe verbal deficiencies.

Prison inmates were likely to have relatives who served time

Forty percent of prison inmates had an immediate family member (father, mother, brother, or sister) who had served time in jail or prison. Similar data are not available for noncriminals, but it is highly unlikely that the proportion is as high.

Most offenders were not married

Among jail and prison inmates—

- About half had never been married and another 20% were divorced or separated (vs. about half unmarried and 4% divorced or separated among U.S. males age 20-29).
- 20% were married (vs. 47% of the comparable U.S. population).

The proportion of divorced and separated whites was much higher in jails and prisons than in the U.S. population; the marital status of black inmates was closer to that of blacks in the U.S. population.

Most inmates had dependent children

Despite the high proportion of unmarried inmates, more than half had children, almost all of them under age 18. More than a third had three or more children. In most cases, children were cared for by the inmate's immediate family while the inmate was in jail or prison.

The level of education reached by jail and prison inmates was far below the national average

These data overrepresent street criminals as opposed to white-collar criminals; only about 40% of all jail and prison inmates had completed high school (vs. 85% of 20- to 29-year-old males in the U.S. population).

- The proportion of high school dropouts (those who started but did not complete high school) was about 3 times larger among the incarcerated.
- Fully 6% of all prisoners had no schooling or only kindergarten. Their

rate of incarceration was more than 3 times that of high school dropouts, the group with the next highest incarceration rate.

- College graduates had an extremely low incarceration rate.

	Incarceration rate (per 1,000 U.S. males age 20-29)
No school/kindergarten	259
1-7 years	83
8th grade	70
9-11 years	46
12th grade	11
13-15 years	6
16 or more years	1

Educational level was closely related to type of offense

- For whites, drug offenses and property crimes such as forgery, fraud, and embezzlement were more characteristic of those with at least 12 years of formal schooling than of those with less than 8 years.
- Confinement for public order crimes or for burglary was more apt to be associated with the lower educational levels.
- Imprisonment for drug offenses or for robbery was more commonly associated with high school graduates.
- Prisoners who had some college prior to incarceration were more likely than those with less education to have been convicted of a nonviolent offense and less likely to have had a past record.

Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice

U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, NCJ-87068, October 1983, pg 37.

Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice 37

References Helpful to Those Working With Programs to
Build and Maintain Family Strengths While a
Parent is Incarcerated

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August 1985

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Book Review

Prisons and Kids

By Ellen Barry

Prisons and Kids: Programs for Inmate Parents, James Boudouris, Ph.D., American Correctional Association, June 1985, 49 pp. \$17.95 (\$14.50 for ACA members).

Ten years ago, the fact that most women in prison were also mothers with primary responsibility for young children was a reality that was rarely acknowledged by either correctional officials or prisoners' rights advocates. Little was known about the problems of incarcerated mothers and their children, few resources were available, and only a handful of programs existed to meet the needs of this "forgotten" population.

Today, in contrast, public awareness of the issue of incarcerated mothers and their children is considerably greater than it was a decade ago. Most states have at least some programs and services which attempt to address the needs of these families. Programs have emerged which address the needs and concerns of incarcerated fathers as well as mothers, and advocates in the field are just beginning to look at the special needs of incarcerated teenage mothers and their children.

In a new booklet published and distributed by the American Correctional Association, James Boudouris tackles the difficult task of cataloguing the variety of programs that exist for incarcerated parents and their children in all 50 states. The result is an informative, although incomplete, summary which in spite of its limitations, provides useful information to both "sides" of the correctional fence—community and prisoner's rights advocates as well as correctional officials.

Advertising for *Prisons and Kids* suggests that Boudouris answers major issues of controversy in the area of parental incarceration including the debate over effects of the institutional environment on children bonding issues, and the affect of familial interaction on rehabilitation. Although the author cites several interesting psychological and sociological studies addressing these and other relevant issues, none of the topics are thoroughly covered. The few brief pages on maternal-infant bonding and effects of separation, for example, whet the appetite without providing a solid foundation for drawing conclusions about how these issues affect the development of effective programs for

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incarcerated parents and their children.

Not surprisingly, the weakest chapter in *Prisons and Kids* is the section on legal issues. In less than three pages, Boudouris touches on issues as diverse and unrelated as the maternal presumption doctrine, prison conditions lawsuits, and liability of prison officials for injuries incurred by visiting children. The issues of foster care placement and termination of parental rights are dealt with in a way that is both confusing and, in some cases, legally inaccurate. Recent changes in federal and state laws governing foster care which have had profound effects on incarcerated parents and their children are not mentioned at all.



A Women's Journal

Finally, the author makes little mention of the substantial—and increasing—body of case law affecting incarcerated parents and their children which has developed in recent years. These lawsuits have contributed, at least in part, to the increase in alternative programs for mothers and children, the improvement of prenatal medical care for women in prisons and jails, and the overall expansion of programs and services for incarcerated parents and their children.

In spite of its limitations, *Prisons and Kids* offers some useful information for advocates working with incarcerated parents and their children. Boudouris pays considerable attention to the topic of prison nurseries, and provides a fascinating summary of prison nursery programs not only in the United States but in other nations as well. In his concluding chapter, the author returns to the subject of prison nurseries and suggests that "it may be useful . . . to reinstate previously existing programs." In spite of a number of ambiguous statements in earlier chapters, the author concludes by advocating for the expansion of programs, recommending that "[f]or humanitarian and moral reasons, more can be done for inmates and their families."

Boudouris includes a compilation of resources which may prove to be the most

useful aspect of the booklet for advocates working with incarcerated parents and their children. The list of programs for incarcerated mothers and their children while still not complete or entirely accurate, is, nevertheless, extensive and very helpful. The uniform Law Commissioners Model Sentencing and Corrections Act, reprinted in its entirety, is a good starting point for the development of proposed legislation in this area. The list of references is short and quite incomplete, but it includes several unusual and interesting sources that are not often included in more comprehensive lists, particularly the references to programs in other countries. Finally, the list of contacts is perhaps most interest-

ing because of the contacts that are *not* listed as opposed to those that are—the vast majority of social services, church-related community and prisoner's rights organizations which are actively involved in expanding and improving services for incarcerated parents and their children are not listed. With a handful of exceptions, all of the contacts listed are wardens, superintendents, and other correctional administrators.

Boudouris has written a highly informative document. However, *Prisons and Kids* is not a comprehensive survey of "programs for incarcerated mothers and their children in all 50 states." It is, rather, a useful (although incomplete) summary of correctionally-based programs as reported by correctional administrators. Certainly, such programs provide critically needed services to incarcerated parents and their children, and are vitally important. However, the impetus for the creation and expansion of those programs has come primarily from community advocates, prisoners and their families, not from correctional administrators. And, without the constant pressure and advocacy from community supporters, incarcerated parents and their children will undoubtedly find themselves as penalized, ignored and unempowered as they were ten years ago. □

MALE OFFENDER PROBLEMS RELATED TO FAMILY

- I. Self-esteem is tied to his relationships. The male inmate probably has lost all that he owns. It is likely he has many failures in his life. By being incarcerated, he is labeled a loser by society. The love and support he receives from family is his only means available to feel worthwhile and have hope for the future.

- II. The inmate feels completely powerless in his relationship to his family in the following ways:
 - A. The male inmate cannot contribute financially to support of family. Many inmates suffer serious guilt feelings when family is suffering financially.
 - B. Inmate is dependent upon family for information which he receives only through occasional letters, visits, or phone calls. When he doesn't receive information, he worries and imagines any number of serious problems.
 - C. When a loved one is sick, injured, or dying, inmates wish desperately to be there. The inmate's anxiety, frustration, and anger are increased as he cannot grieve naturally by being there.
 - D. Inmate is completely dependent upon loved ones for whatever material possessions he has in prison.
 - E. Problems in the relationships create a severe crisis for the inmate. Fear of the loss of his sole support and hope pushes him to emotional reactions ranging from depression to anger. Inmate can end up hurting himself or someone else.
 - F. There are generally two different types of reactions inmates have to possibilities of problems in their relationships that lead to problems.
 1. First type is denial of any problems at all, no matter how

much evidence to the contrary there is. In the extreme, the inmate will deny any problems right up to the point the relationship is broken off by the other party.

2. Second type is believing there is a problem and always looking for evidence to reinforce his feelings. This leads inmates to misinterpret information they receive and develop blaming behavior. In the extreme, the inmate breaks up relationships that were sound.

David Showalter, MSW, worked as a Social Worker at the Kansas State Penitentiary where he, along with Charlotte Jones, MSW, pioneered a marital workshop for inmates and their wives.

Distributed by David Showalter at ACA Congress, Toronto, 1982

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FAMILY TIES



Summer 1985

Third Issue

Welcome To The Third Issue Of FAMILY TIES

The focus of this issue is on prison parenting and community involvement in prison programs. We've addressed this with the lead article which gives a step by step explanation on how to most effectively deal with your social worker to maximize contact with your child. In addition, several more of you have written about your program activities, including two with extensive community contact. This issue of FAMILY TIES also has a section on recent legal developments in prison parenting and a poignant letter from an incarcerated mother.

We thank everyone who has sent us contributions and comments. Let's continue to hear from you because you make this newsletter what it is. Let us know if there are topics you would like FAMILY TIES to address. In the next issue, we will describe the fair hearing process, a new procedure by which you can challenge agency decisions regarding your child in foster care. Send your ideas, contributions and comments for the next issue to:

FAMILY TIES
c/o Youth Law Center
1663 Mission St., 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103

Working With Your Social Worker

This article is designed to give inmates whose child(ren) are in foster care and their advocates a guide to working with their social service worker. It is aimed primarily at inmates who are serving relatively short sentences and expect to regain custody of their children when they are released. By following these guidelines, you can reduce the possibility that a worker will move to terminate your parental rights and can increase your chances of successfully defending against a petition for termination, if one is filed.

First Steps

As soon as possible after you are sent to a particular institution, send your caseworker a letter. The letter should explain your situation as clearly as possible: including how much time you have to serve, what your parole date is, and any other information you have about a release. If you will be involved in specific programs like drug rehabilitation, parenting training, and so on, tell the caseworker about these. You should also provide the caseworker with names of persons outside who can be contacted for information about you or your kids.

Remember that the worker does not know what life in the institution is like.

Explain rules that limit your contact with the worker and your children. For example, you may not be able to use the telephone without permission of a counselor and you may not talk to your worker very often. If your correspondence list is limited, explain how the worker can get on the list. If visitation is limited to certain times, or if there are overnight visits with prior arrangements, explain how these visits work. It is important that the worker have a picture of what it's like to be in the institution. If the worker does not understand, he or she may think you are being uncooperative just because you are following prison rules.

Second, if you don't already have a copy of the case plan for your children, ask the worker to send you one. This plan will explain what services the



Department will provide to you and your children and what the Department's eventual goals for your children are. You must review this to make sure that it is accurate and agrees with your perceptions. If you disagree, tell the worker immediately. Remember, you are expected to live by the terms of the case plan. If it says that you will take parenting training courses, you must attend a course at your institution. If such a course isn't available, you must explain this to the worker. The case plan is very important when the decision is made about whether to send your children back with you or to take your children away. If you have done everything the case plan says, you will have a good argument for the return of your children.

Third, arrange with the worker some reliable way to communicate with your children. Ideally you will be able to talk directly to your children at the foster home. Ask the worker if you can have telephone contact either at home or through DSS. Also ask where you should send letters.

Finally, it is a good idea to send a letter to the foster parent, either directly or through the worker. If you don't have the address, send the letter to the worker and ask that it be delivered to the foster parent. The letter should explain who you are, how long you will be serving and how concerned you are about your children. A sympathetic foster parent can be your best ally in regaining custody of your children, but many foster parents don't believe incarcerated parents. Good communication will convince the foster parent that you are concerned.

While You're Inside

The most important thing you can do while you're inside is to maintain communication with your worker and your children.

First, write or telephone your worker regularly while you're incarcerated. Your letters should tell the worker what you have achieved inside. For example, if you have completed a vocational program or a parenting program, tell the worker

that. If you get any certificate or award, send a copy to the worker (but make sure you keep a copy for yourself.). Tell the worker how you are progressing toward parole and what your chances are of early release. If you have sent your children money or gifts, tell the worker that. You should also explain any problems you are having communicating with your children. Document all your efforts to stay in touch with your children.

If you are having any problems, ask the worker to help. Ask for a written response about the problems you are having.

Second, communicate with your children by letter or by phone. It is a good idea to send letters so that you can keep copies and prove that you have stayed in touch with them. If the worker refuses to allow you to telephone, write a letter to the worker protesting this decision and keep a copy of your protest. Ask the worker how often you can and should communicate and stick to that schedule. If you have earned extra money and can send your kids money or presents, it is a good idea to keep records showing that you have done so. This shows that you have made efforts to support your kids as best you can while you're inside.



Finally, remember your case plan. Keep a record of everything you do that complies with the requirements of the case plan. If you had to attend a parenting class, get a record of the fact that you went to the parenting class. If you are attending counseling get a letter from the counselor or psychologist saying that you have attended counseling. Again you will have to show that you've complied with the case plan in order to get your kids back.

Documents

Notice that all through this article the importance of keeping records and documents is stressed. You should keep a diary of every contact you have with your children or with your worker. The diary should include problems you have had and efforts you have made to solve them. Record-keeping at the Department of Social Services may not be too good and it may be hard for you to prove all the efforts you have made to stay in touch with your family. You should have copies of every letter that has to do with your children if you can. If you can't make copies at least note that you sent a letter and make a little summary of the letter in your diary. Two years later it is hard to remember exactly what happened.

Conclusion

Following these guidelines should help you to maintain a relationship with your children and to make sure they are returned to you. Even though you try your best, however, you may still have problems. The caseworker may make decisions you don't like.

PROBLEMS OF OFFENDERS' CHILDREN

- I. Emotional reaction to father's incarceration
 - A. Children feel unwanted and unloved.
 - B. Children may feel guilty as if they were responsible for father's incarceration.
 - C. They may develop low self-esteem out of feeling rejected and unwanted.
 - D. Long-term emotional problems may develop that last into adulthood.
- II. Children develop attitude and behavioral problems as reaction to father's incarceration.
 - A. Child may become withdrawn and isolated.
 - B. On other hand, child may become aggressive and develop acting out behavior at home and school. Children may become a real discipline problem.
 - C. Poor school performance may develop.
 - D. Children may develop anti-social behavior such as stealing, as a means of identifying with absent parent.
 - E. Child may run away.
 - F. Some children may follow their father's lifestyle and become adult criminals.
 - G. Child may turn to use of drugs and alcohol.
- III. Problems develop when child is not told where father is and why. This is done to protect the child. Usually the child can sense that something is wrong and guess the truth. The result is confusion for the child and he/she has no way of venting grief.

IV. Children also feel the rejection of relatives and society. They can receive cruel teasing from peers. This can intensify the the emotional and behavioral problems of the child.

David Showalter, MSW, worked as a Social Worker at Kansas State Penitentiary where he , along with Charlotte Jones, MSW, pioneered a marital workshop for inmates and their wives.

see Bibliograph pg. IV.C.3

OPEN, INC. - FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP
June, 1985

NEXT MEETING: The Family Support Group will meet Tuesday, July 9, 1985, at 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Fred M. Lange Center. Our topic will be Constructive Use of Community Resources - How to Find and Use Them. Our guest speaker will be Carol Madison, the After Care and Aging Program Specialist for the Mental Health Association of Dallas.

DIRECTIONS: The Fred M. Lange Center is located at the intersection of Live Oak Street and Annex Avenue. To reach the Center by car, you may use North Central Expressway. Get off Central at Exit 4, Fitzhugh; if you were heading south, turn left. Go to Live Oak and turn right. Go three blocks and turn right onto Annex. If you are coming on IH30 or IH35, you can follow signs for US75 north to Sherman. Get off at the Bryan Street exit; it says Exit Only. From Bryan, go right one block to Live Oak. Turn left onto Live Oak. Continue across Carroll Avenue; the next cross street is Annex Avenue. Turn left onto Annex. The parking lot and entrance to the Center are at the rear of the building, off Annex. Bus routes #1 and #20 run in front of the Center on Live Oak.

CARPPOOL INFORMATION: For transportation to any of the TDC units call -

1. Milton Kelly 943-5590
2. Roscoe Edwards 235-1437
3. Katherine Kindred 817/737-6969
(Ft. Worth)
4. Salvation Army Bus Ministry 353-2731

MARK YOUR CALENDARS - for the upcoming meeting listed below:

August 13 - SUCCESS FOLLOWING RELEASE

TIME: Registration - 7:00 p.m. Meeting: 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

PLACE: Community Room of the Fred M. Lange Center
1310 Annex Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75204

HOW TO HELP CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Ruth Hunt, Clinical Administrator at the Southwest Family Institute of Dallas, was the guest speaker for the June 11, 1985 Family Support Group Meeting. The topic was How To Help the Children of Prisoners. Some of Ms. Hunt's information is included in the following report.

In every day life, attachments are formed as children develop a strong relationship with their family members. For many years, these family members are responsible for the welfare and care of the children of that family. It is very important for the child to have a strong and continuing relationship with important family members, such as parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts or uncles. A good relationship helps the child's emotional and social growth.

When a family member is sent to prison, the separation and loss are very confusing and painful for the child and family. The children may not know where their father or mother has gone. They may become anxious and depressed. Children may feel that whatever happened was their fault. They may stop seeing their friends, and begin to have problems in school or at home.

CRISIS POINTS

There are 3 major crisis points for families facing the correctional experience: the arrest, the period of incarceration, and the release. Families and children will experience different concerns and fears during each stage.

The Arrest There are many difficulties faced by children upon the arrest of a family member. Often, the child will see the parent verbally abused, handcuffed, and removed from the home by force. Or, the child may come home, and the parent or family member has already gone. Many of the child's problems come from not knowing what really happened. When an arrest occurs, family members often won't discuss it in an open or honest manner. To protect the child, the family may say things like: the parent is sick and at the hospital; he/she had to go someplace else for work; or even that the person has died. Many families look at the arrest as something not to be talked about, a "taboo subject". As a result, the child doesn't have the chance to express feelings of loss and grief, fear and insecurity. These children find little support from the family, friends, or community. Not knowing when or if the parent will return, or if the parent is hurt, the child often faces these fears and unanswered questions alone.

Telling a child that a family member is in prison is a difficult thing to do. You may not know what or how much to say. Children are very sensitive to your feelings and can sense if you are unhappy or upset. If you are uneasy or uncomfortable about talking to your child, he/she may start to think that something very bad has happened. The child may begin to feel that he/she is to blame for the disappearance of the family member. The situation may get worse if they ask you questions and you don't want to talk about it. Children have very active imaginations. If they don't know what's going on, they will use their imaginations to explain the situation. They begin to imagine that the family member is never coming back. The more bad things they imagine, the more the child will be upset, fearful and insecure. Parents and other family members may want to consider the following ideas for helping the child understand and deal with the loss of the loved one.

1. Telling your child the truth isn't easy. There will be many questions the child may want to ask. Make your answers as simple as you can. Answer only what is asked. If the child needs more information, he/she will ask more questions. Usually, we will only ask for the amount that we can handle. We can take in painful and scary information a little at a time. Children will usually be most concerned about when the person is coming home, and who is going to take care of the child. Reassure them that you are there to love and take care of them. A parent can be honest and talk to the child in a clear and simple way. You may want to plan ahead of time how you are going to answer your child's questions.
2. Children may be angry, sad or depressed when a family member goes to prison. This is natural. The child needs to know that it is all right for him/her to feel this way. Children, like adults, need to feel all their feelings. Often we will tell ourselves that being angry or sad is not good. But the feelings are real. We need to admit them so that we can deal with them and go on to other feelings. You can let your child know that you are unhappy and that you know he/she is unhappy. Talking and sharing feelings together will help both of you learn new ways of dealing with those feelings.
3. There are no easy or quick solutions to this problem. There is no one right way to deal with this situation. If you are part of the decision making about what your child will be told, take time to think through what will be best for your child and family. The child and the family have to learn how to deal with this. It is something that has happened and has become part of your life.

4. Although it is important for your child to understand what is happening you may not want other people to know. Children can be very cruel to each other. They may tease your child for having a family member in prison. To protect your child, you may teach him or her that some subjects are to discuss at home but not at school or with friends. Your child can learn to say, "Daddy is not living with us right now." This way the child can tell the truth without having to explain.

Period of Incarceration After the loved one has gone to prison, the family will have to decide whether or not to let the child visit the incarcerated family member. Many families feel that it won't be good for the child to see that person in prison. The prisoner also may not want the child to see him/her. There are many reasons not to let a child visit. But visiting a loved one can be a positive and important thing for a child to do.

1. A visit will help ease the child's fears and concerns about the missing family member. Without a chance to see the family member for themselves, children will imagine the worst. Their fears are fed by T.V., the movies, comic books, or from people talking. They may imagine that person being sick, mistreated, or hungry. They may think that the person is being beaten or even dead. Being able to see the family member, to talk to him/her, to see the prison, and to learn that this person is all right, can be very comforting for the child. Often, it is not the visit itself that creates the anxiety and depression in the child. It is being separated and not knowing if the family member is all right that causes the problems for the child.
2. Children will still need and love their parents or family member even if he/she has committed a crime. Being able to see the inmate will help the child know that he/she has not been abandoned. Even though the family member is separated from his/her family and children, visits can help the child feel that he/she is still very important to the inmate.
3. Children learn from their parents and people around them. There are many reasons why a child of an offender may follow the same pattern. If a child is told only that his/her father or mother is a bad person because he/she committed a crime, the child may believe only that side of the person. The child who can visit and talk with the inmate will see that this person is good even though he did something bad. The child will feel good about the parent, and himself as well.
4. A good way for children to keep in touch with their family member in prison is through the mail. It's a good way to get questions answered. Children can ask what he/she does during the day, what the prison is like, or anything they may be wondering about. Children can write and tell the inmate how they are feeling and share what they are doing. Letters aren't the only way to communicate. Children can send drawings, photographs, cards or poems, or samples of their school work papers. Children may want a special place to keep the letters they'll receive from the loved one in prison. Anything will work: an empty shoebox, a notebook, a bulletin board in his/her bedroom. Children, like adults, need to know that they are loved. Encouraging the child to correspond with the inmate will help reduce some of the distance and pain of the separation.

The Release The family, the children, and the inmate tend to have unrealistic expectations about being together again. The inmate may feel that he/she will come out and be able to pick up where he/she left off when they went to prison. The family may believe that once the inmate is home, things will be back to normal, he/she will

get a job, making it easier to pay the bills, he'll be there to discipline the children, etc. The child may see the return as being a magical answer to all his problems and all his wishes will be filled. Many children are still hurt and angry that the person has been away. They may not want him to come back, because the person might get taken away again.

Everyone must remember that release from prison is not the end of the correctional experience. The family had to adjust to not having that family member around. The family will have to readjust to having him back. People in the family had to do different jobs, or take on more responsibility while the inmate was away. After release, the family needs to talk about who will do which jobs and make room again for the ex-offender. It can be as frustrating and painful as the separation. You will have to learn how to be a family again, sharing time and thoughts together, but having some private time as well.

CONCLUSION

Raising a child is one of life's hardest jobs. When a member of the child's family is in prison, the job becomes even harder. You will have to make many decisions based on your particular situation and what you believe is best for the child. You will want to protect your child from the painful reality, but this is impossible. In trying to hide the truth, you may increase the child's inner anxieties and stress and create later behavior problems. In the long run, being honest and facing reality as much as possible will make the adjustments easier.

-4-

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PROBLEMS OF OFFENDERS' WIVES

- I. Wife is left with all responsibilities without support of spouse.
 - A. Usually the wife is untrained and inexperienced. Thus, she probably will not obtain employment that will allow her to support herself and family. Most families are poor to begin with, and there is a real struggle for survival.
 - B. She must raise the children alone
 1. Support them.
 2. Meet all their emotional needs.
 3. Discipline them. Many times the father provided the discipline and the mother feels unable to handle this process, or the children refuse to obey her.
 4. She may not have good parenting skills through lack of education and awareness of alternatives.
 - C. She tries to provide long distance emotional support for incarcerated spouses. Many times the offender demands she supply material items. The offenders also demand she seek and pay for legal help. Sometimes the offenders demand she pay gambling debts he incurs in prison.
 - D. She must meet payments on all bills that are left or all property is lost.
- II. Wives' own self-esteem and emotions are a problem.
 - A. Many times the wife has been dependent upon the male offender for support and decision making. She may lack self confidence to make most routine decisions that daily living requires.
 - B. She is without her spouse to meet her needs for affection, emotional

support and sexual fulfillment. She feels lonely, unloved and many times overwhelmed by her problems. She can be very vulnerable to a male who offers affection and support.

- C. She may not be able to meet her children's emotional needs because of the lack of fulfillment in her life.
- D. Her self-confidence can be lower by judgement from family members, friends and society for the simple fact of having a relationship with a criminal. She receives pressure to leave him. And if she doesn't, she may lose all her support system. The judgement she feels from others helps her to feel guilt and shame which are destructive for her. In the long run, she will develop anger and bitterness toward people and society in general.

II. She has major problems receiving adequate social services necessary for her to function. Society increases her isolation by lack of support. Her anger and bitterness increase toward society and authority. This situation exists for most of the following reasons.

- A. No comprehensive social service system exists for offenders' families as society has chosen not to recognize their problems.
- B. She may not meet eligibility requirements for available services.
- C. She may feel she receives judgement from a service worker when she applies for aid.
- D. She refuses to seek aid for fear of rejection.
- E. She refuses to seek aid because of pride. She feels it is her duty or responsibility to make it on her own no matter what problems face her.

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(see bibliography page IV.C.3)

Strengthening Families as Natural Support Systems for Offenders

BY SUSAN HOFFMAN FISHMAN AND ALBERT S. ALISSI, D.S.W.*

SERVICE programs in the field of corrections traditionally focus their efforts on rehabilitating, controlling or otherwise "treating" the individual offender, while little systematic attention is given to spouses, parents, children, relatives and other significantly related individuals whose well-being is often placed in jeopardy as a result of the offender's incarceration. Although the offender in prison is provided with food, clothing, shelter, some opportunity for job training and other types of physical and emotional support, the family, and specifically the woman, he has left behind has had to deal with all her needs alone. Not only must she establish a new life, care for her children and withstand the type of social criticism that can occur as a result of the crime committed by her loved one, but she must also learn to cope with the unfamiliar and often frightening court and prison systems in order to maintain meaningful contact with the offender.¹

It has been documented that inmates who do maintain family ties while in prison have a better chance of remaining out of prison after their release. Drawing from a study of 412 prisoners of a minimum security facility in California, Holt and Miller,² in 1972, concluded that there was a strong and consistently positive relationship between parole success and the maintenance of

strong family ties during imprisonment. The study suggests that family members, as a natural support group for offenders, have a tremendous potential for assisting in the reintegration of the offender to community life.

Since family members themselves, however, are under new pressures and face new financial and emotional burdens during the separation process, they are usually not in a position to serve in an effective helping capacity until they stabilize their own lives and adapt to the "crisis" situation brought on by their loved one's incarceration.

Judith Weintraub and Mary Schwartz, in their article entitled, "The Prisoner's Wife: A Study in Crisis" recognized and documented the need and importance of prompt assistance for families of offenders.³ It is these individuals who must be helped to sustain themselves and to maintain stable relationships during separation so that the family unit can offer an offender the support and security he will need upon his release. Although specialized assistance to prisoners' families can be essential to the well-being of the family members themselves and their corresponding ability to assist in the reintegration process of the offender, recognition of the unique needs of these families and appropriate services are

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¹ Mary Schwartz and Judith Weintraub, "The Prisoner's Wife: A Study in Crisis," FEDERAL PROBATION, Vol. 38, No. 4 (December 1974).

² Norman Holt and Donald Miller, *Explorations in Inmate Family Relationships*, Research Division, California Department of Corrections, Report Number 46, Sacramento, California: 1972.

³ Schwartz and Weintraub, *op. cit.* See also Judith Weintraub, "The Delivery of Services to Families of Prisoners," FEDERAL PROBATION, Vol. 40, No. 4, (December 1976). These articles were most influential in the development of Women in Crisis.

not available through existing social service agencies. And, even though existing literature on families of offenders clearly indicates the specific needs of this special group, it presents little guidance on concrete, practical service programs which can effectively address such needs.⁴

The purpose of this article is to describe an innovative pilot program in Connecticut which was designed to meet the special needs of offenders' families and which has been formally evaluated as being highly successful in accomplishing that task.

Women in Crisis is a private, nonprofit program which utilizes trained volunteers to support and assist women from the Greater Hartford area whose husbands, boyfriends or sons have been sentenced to prison for the first time. Women in Crisis was implemented in March of 1977.⁵ During the planning stages of the project, the Advisory Board of Women in Crisis developed several basic, underlying concepts and premises upon which the program itself now operates: (1) The use of volunteers as service providers, (2) The relationship as the primary tool of the volunteer, and (3) Advocacy as a role of the volunteer.

I. *The Use of Volunteers as Service Providers.*

—The first decision reached by the planners of Women in Crisis was an overwhelming commitment to the use of trained women volunteers as the primary service providers to clients. The Board and staff reached this decision after carefully documenting available research and observing the experiences of numerous women whose men were sent to prison. They realized that women whose men are sentenced to prison experience what is usually termed as a "crisis" in their lives, a short term situational disturbance. Except in unusual circumstances, they are not pathologically damaged.⁶ Based on this information, the Board concluded that most women could adjust to the abrupt and distressing change in

their life styles with the help of an informed, sensitive individual (volunteer).

In September of 1978, a study on the first 8 months of the program's operation was completed under the supervision of the University of Connecticut School of Social Work.⁷ The researcher drew a total population sample including all clients and volunteers engaged in the Women in Crisis Program from March 1, 1977, through October 31, 1977. Interview schedules and questionnaires were developed, pretested in the field and administered. Clients and volunteers were contacted using all available information on record at the Women in Crisis office. In all, 22 out of a total possible sample of 40 clients were administered a personal interview; 16 were unable to be contacted and 2 refused to be interviewed. In addition, 14 of the 15 volunteers who had provided the services to the clients in the sample were identified and interviewed. The interview procedure was standardized and systematically applied to clients and volunteers alike. The study offered evidence that those volunteers who had been recruited from the community, trained by the program and assigned to assist families of offenders had been highly successful in their roles and offered invaluable services to their clients. In addition, statements made by volunteers, clients and representatives from community agencies connected with the program stressed several important reasons why volunteers can and should be major service-givers for the Women in Crisis Program. All of these factors have universal implications:

(1) Volunteers as helpers are not seen by potential clients as professional "do-gooders" or as part of any system connected with their recent experiences, but rather as concerned people addressing basic human needs.

(2) Volunteers as private citizens, taxpayers and community participants have a vested interest in the functioning of the correctional process. Their involvement in this process not only serves as a means of monitoring the system but can also serve as a tool for its improvement. One fine example of volunteers as pacemakers for change has occurred over the past year and a half at Superior Court in Hartford. Volunteers from Women in Crisis are present in court each sentencing day to approach and assist families immediately after an offender is sentenced and taken away. When the program initially began this service, court officials were suspicious of

⁴ See for example, Laura Bakker et al., "Hidden Victims of Crime," *Social Work*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (March 1978); Donald Schneller, "Some Social and Psychological Effects on the Families of Negro Prisoners," *American Journal of Correction*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (1975); Eugene Zemans and Ruth Cavan, "Marital Relationships of Prisoners," *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (1958); Harvey Wilmer, et al., "Group Treatment of Prisoners and Their Families," *Mental Hygiene*, Vol. 50 (1966); Pauline Morris, "Fathers in Prison," *British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 7 (1967); Sidney Friedman and Conway Eazelstyn, "The Adjustment of Children of Jail Inmates," *FEDERAL PROBATION*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (1965) and Sister Maureen Fenlon, "An Innovative Project For Wives and Families of Prisoners," *FCI Treatment Notes*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (1972).

⁵ Much of the early leadership in developing the program came from Margaret Worthington, a retired social worker, who conceived of the program in 1975 and served as the first President of the Women in Crisis Board of Directors.

⁶ Schwartz and Weintraub, *op. cit.*

⁷ *Women in Crisis Program Evaluation: March 1, 1977—October 31, 1977*, Hartford, Connecticut: Women in Crisis, 1978.

the volunteers and seemed indifferent to the needs of families in the court setting. For months, however, they have observed the positive effects resulting from information and support provided to families in court and, as a result, the sensitivity level of these court personnel has changed dramatically. Prosecutors, public defenders and sheriffs are now personally escorting families to Women in Crisis volunteers for assistance and are openly acknowledging an understanding of the stress being experienced by the families.

(3) As a result of their participation in the program, volunteers receive personal satisfactions and opportunities for education and growth. All volunteers are required to complete the intensive Women in Crisis training program before assignment is made. Training consists of four classroom sessions, each 3 hours in length. Topics include an introduction to the criminal justice system, values clarification, interpersonal skills, crisis intervention, the culture of poverty and a description of resources in the community. In addition to the classroom sessions, volunteers are also provided with orientations to Correctional Institutions and Superior Court. Periodic inservice training sessions are held throughout the year in order to provide detailed information on specialized topics of interest to Women in Crisis volunteers.

This growth and increased awareness of volunteers, in turn, affects the attitudes of others in the community with whom they come in contact. Women in Crisis volunteers interviewed for the program study highlighted some additional benefits gained through their involvement with the program. Half of the women interviewed observed an increase in their own sensitivity to the problems and strengths of others; approximately one-third of the volunteers felt that their communication skills became more highly developed; and one-third emphasized the satisfaction they received from making new acquaintances and coming to know women from different social and economic backgrounds.

(4) The participation of volunteers as the primary service providers to families of offenders is economically feasible for the program itself in a time when costs of services continue to increase.

II. *Relationship as the Primary Tool of the Volunteer.*—A second major concept which was substantiated by data in the evaluation study of the program, identified the informal, personal and

nonprofessional relationship between the volunteer and her client as the most important factor in the client's adjustment to her new life. At certain times, particularly on sentencing day, on the first visit to the institution and during the first few weeks of adjustment, the "woman in crisis" was in crucial need of the human, practical, uncomplicated assistance that was offered by an objective, informal volunteer.

(1) *Sentencing Day.*—Regardless of the nature of the crime committed by an offender and the likelihood that the offense would necessitate his incarceration, most families are not prepared for the possibility that the man will, in fact, be going to prison for an indefinite length of time, and, as a result, display symptoms of shock, panic or emotional turmoil in court when sentencing does occur. Therefore, Women in Crisis was structured in such a way that volunteers, under the supervision of a court liaison staff person, would be available in court each sentencing day to provide immediate information on court procedures and prison rules as well as practical guidance and emotional support. The evaluation study substantiated the assumption that Women in Crisis clients would need and respond positively to informed, well meaning volunteers in court regardless of differences in race or social background.

Eighty nine percent of those clients interviewed felt that it was important for them to have had someone in court to assist them on sentencing day and the vast majority of clients stated that the race of their volunteer made no difference to them. The type of human support that volunteers provide each week can best be understood by examining the specific experiences of Mrs. S and her volunteer, Jan.

Mrs. S., a woman in her fifties, is a widow with five sons. Her eldest son was in court to be sentenced for a sexual offense. Mrs. S. spoke in open court to the judge. She told him how she had tried to help her son and how difficult it had been for her. Jan approached Mrs. S. after the judge had sentenced the young man, explained who she was and asked if she could be of any assistance to her. Mrs. S. and Jan sat down together in the hallway, whereupon Mrs. S. put her head on Jan's shoulder and wept. She then expressed her feelings of frustration and shame in speaking before the judge. Jan assured her that her comments had made a great impact on the court. After talking with Jan for another 15 minutes, Mrs. S. told Jan that "just as I thought I didn't have anyone to turn to, you were there to help me."

(2) *First Visit.*—The first visit by a woman to her loved one in prison is usually a very difficult experience. There are a great many specific reg-

ulations and a precise visiting procedure outlined by the institution which can be overwhelming to a family member who is unaccustomed to expressing feelings in such a structured environment. The location of the prison itself can often present an insurmountable problem to a family without access to private transportation.³

The ability of a family member to acquire the appropriate information and support necessary to overcome these practical and emotional obstacles can determine her feelings towards subsequent visits. For this reason, the initial Advisory Board and staff of Women in Crisis felt that it was imperative for a volunteer, as part of her job responsibilities, to accompany a woman on her first visit to the prison. The volunteer would, in no way, be part of the actual visit itself but would be available to guide the woman through the procedure and discuss her reactions to it before and after the visit itself. In addition, by offering private transportation during weekday hours, the volunteers would be providing the "woman in crisis" with the opportunity to visit for the first time under less crowded conditions and for a longer period of time.

The evaluation study of Women in Crisis supported the program's commitment to the use of volunteers as helpers on the first visit. Over half of the clients interviewed experienced fear and nervousness before their first visit to the institution. Two-thirds of the clients interviewed indicated that they talked with their volunteers about their feelings prior to the first visit. Over 85 percent of the clients who were accompanied by their volunteers on their first visit said they relied heavily on the volunteer's presence. When asked whether it was helpful to have had a volunteer go with them on the first visit, 93 percent of the clients responded positively. Only those clients who were already familiar with the procedure felt that the volunteer's assistance was not imperative. It would seem, therefore, from this data, that the presence of a caring, objective person at this critical time in the family's adjustment process is very helpful. One volunteer described a client's first visit and her own role as an important helper:

³ Somers Correctional Institution in Somers, Connecticut, is the primary intake prison for adult male felons in Connecticut, and like many prisons throughout the country, is located in an area of the state that is not on any preestablished, major passenger routes. Until April of 1978, when Women in Crisis successfully advocated on behalf of its clients for increased public bus service to Somers, there was only one bus per week which traveled from Hartford, the major urban area serviced by the program. This bus traveled only on the weekend when visiting hours are shorter and when the visiting room is the most congested. There is, however, no regular public transportation from other areas of Connecticut to Somers.

When I met Dee for the first time, I was amazed that she seemed so calm and so much in control of herself. Until we went up to the prison together for that first visit, I wasn't sure what I could offer her. We talked quietly during the drive to Somers but as we approached the parking lot of the prison, I noticed that her expression suddenly changed. We walked together to the metal detector and into the first waiting area. At this point, Dee completely broke down, refused to go any further and insisted that she would never come to this awful place again. I sat with her as she cried and quietly encouraged her to go into the visiting room, since her husband was probably just as nervous and anxious to see her as she was. After what seemed like hours, she did finally go in. Later she told me that she would never have done so if it had not been for me.

It should be mentioned, at this point, that Women in Crisis volunteers are instructed to accompany a client *only* on this first, critical visit. The program does not want the volunteer to spend her time simply as a chauffeur. Nor does it feel that it is helpful for the "woman in crisis" to develop a dependency on the volunteer for transportation over a long period of time. Clients are, therefore, encouraged to develop their own resources. Since many clients mentioned during the evaluation interviews that the institution was frightening for them only until they became familiar with the visiting routine, it is apparent that continued volunteer support on additional visits is unnecessary.

(3) *The 6- to 8-Week Adjustment Period.*—In addition to the critical support that a volunteer provides to her client at the specific points of crisis on sentencing day and on the first visit, a volunteer is also available as a resource on continuing, intensive basis for the 6- to 8-week period which usually reflects the average critical adjustment time for a woman whose loved one has recently been incarcerated. Periodic followup can continue until the point when the man is released from the institution if the family desires this support. Clients interviewed indicated that of all the types of assistance provided by the volunteers during this adjustment period, it was the most helpful to have been able to relate on a human level to another person, to have "someone to talk to." The following letter, which one client wrote to her volunteer, describes the impact that their relationship had on her life:

Dear Meg:

I wrote you this letter to know how you field. I wish that when you receive this letter you are in good condition of health.

Mrs. Meg, I wish you have a good luck in your summer vacation. I meet you because you was a wonderwomen, who I was the pleasure to know. I would never

forget the day I know you because you bring me your friendly when I was alone.

Have a great summer vacation with all of your families. Stay as nice as you are. I will always remember you.

Sincerely,
Your friend, Maria.

III. *Advocacy as a Role of the Volunteer.*— Although the initial Board of Women in Crisis considered the emotional support and assistance provided to a family member by a volunteer to be of critical importance, it also recognized additional concerns of clients which could not be addressed through emotional support alone. Families in turmoil need accurate information in order to make rational decisions about their future. They need to identify and establish contact with the appropriate personnel at the institution so that their concerns and fears about their loved ones can be expressed and addressed. They may need practical, professional services or crisis intervention to alleviate on-going or emergency situations. Many families facing problems so soon after the offender's incarceration feel helpless and overwhelmed. For this reason, the planners of Women in Crisis concluded that it would be important for well trained, informed volunteers, as part of their job assignment, to assume a role of advocacy on behalf of their clients. They, as vocal representatives of an established organization, could serve as liaisons and investigators to gather and interpret necessary information and steer clients towards appropriate, existing services. They could also intervene on issues relating to the prison if the client had a justifiable complaint and received no satisfactory response to it.

Since March of 1977 when the program officially began operation, volunteers have assumed advocacy roles in specific cases. Various types of services that volunteers have provided and the results of their intervention are summarized below:

An agitated mother called her volunteer because her son had been writing to her and complaining that he was being heavily drugged at the prison. Since the mother was unable to clarify the situation, the volunteer called the institution as a representative of Women in Crisis and established, to the mother's relief, that the inmate was not being medicated.

In her conversations with a young family member, one volunteer discovered that, as of mid-October, the woman had not enrolled her children in school. The woman was embarrassed that the youngsters did not have proper clothing to wear to school. The volunteer suggested to the woman that they visit a local clothing

bank together. When the woman acquired sufficient clothing for her children, she and the volunteer went to the school and registered the children in classes.

A volunteer whose client was being evicted from her apartment spent countless hours with her as the woman searched for suitable living quarters for herself and her small children.

A volunteer whose client was lonely and isolated in a suburban town arranged for a scholarship to a class at the local Y.W.C.A. for the woman so that she could meet and be with other women during the day.

An offender contacted the agency for help in re-establishing a relationship with his 3½-year-old son who was living with his former wife's parents. The parents had never responded to any of the offender's letters to them. A volunteer wrote a letter to the in-laws informing them of the man's desire to see his son upon his release from prison. When the in-laws responded to the letter, the volunteer was able to reassure them about the man's intentions and his awareness of the difficulties such a visit might cause. The in-laws were appreciative of the support offered by the volunteer and agreed to one initial visit between the child and his father. Subsequent visits ensued.

Additional Services

Although Women in Crisis was established to address the needs of offenders' families during the critical period immediately following the man's sentencing and initial incarceration, the program has begun to develop services at other key points in time when family members are equally in need of vital assistance. Judith Weintraub, in her article, "The Delivery of Services to Families of Offenders,"⁹ identifies arrest and arraignment and pre and post release as additionally turbulent and bewildering periods of crisis for families of offenders. The experiences of Women in Crisis over the past 2 years have substantiated her observations.

When loved ones cannot raise bail and must remain incarcerated for varying lengths of time prior to sentencing, families face practical, emotional and financial burdens as a result of the man's abrupt absence from the home. Vital information on court and jail procedures is as confusing and difficult to obtain as it is once the man is sentenced. Family members whose men have served their time and are preparing to reenter community life have adjusted to new roles and taken on new responsibilities during the man's absence. Their expectations may not be consistent with those of the offender whose life in prison has been so vastly different from their daily existence on the street. Common goals and realistic plans must be established between the man and his family so that the offender may experience

⁹ Weintraub, *op. cit.*

a smooth transition between prison and community life.

Women in Crisis volunteers have begun to provide support services to families of felony offenders who remain incarcerated prior to sentencing. These family members (whose loved ones are classified as "transfers") receive the same type of services provided by the agency to families of sentenced offenders. Counselors and other personnel at the correctional facility, private attorneys, public defenders and bondsmen refer "transfer" families in need to the agency on a regular basis.

Within the "Return to Community" component, a family counselor is available to assist an offender and his family in establishing realistic goals and to facilitate effective communication among family members. The family counselor is in the process of determining methods for utilizing trained volunteers within this new project.

Women in Crisis also runs "personal growth classes" and group activities for family members of offenders. These sessions not only provide the opportunity for women to gather socially, but also allow them to discuss common problems and learn new skills which may be valuable to them as they adjust to new lives on their own. Some of the topics which have been addressed in the past include single person parenting, money management and interpersonal communication.

Summary

Existing literature is limited in that it hypothesizes on the various means for meeting needs of offenders' families but does not present concrete programs and methods for dealing with these specific needs. Women in Crisis authenticates a method of providing services which has major advantages. In the first place, it is practical and can be offered with limited financial resources because it utilizes trained women volunteers as primary service providers. In addition, it provides

the opportunity for volunteers, as representatives of their communities, to serve in a positive way and contribute to the adjustment process of offenders' families. Not only do these volunteers realize personal rewards and satisfactions, but they also offer an effective, straightforward form of assistance which is viewed as genuine by family members "in crisis." To the extent that families are assisted in dealing with crises, there is every reason to believe that they can be strengthened to become a major source of support in furthering the rehabilitation of the offender as well.

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IT IS HOPED that the legal and social work systems recognize their long overdue commitment to provide comprehensive and systematic services to the families of prisoners.—MARY C. SCHWARTZ AND JUDITH F. WEINTRAUB

My Husband Is in Prison



I believe that few marriages come under such close scrutiny as those of inmates and their spouses

BY TRICIA HEDIN

Over the years, I've become quite resourceful in offering half-truths to those who ask about my marriage. "It is a commuter marriage," I say. Or: "My husband is an artist, working on a government grant." Sometimes, particularly when I'm tired, I try to change the subject. When my spirits and energy are high, though, I say the simple truth: "He is in prison."

The truth requires stamina, as any prison wife will explain. There are pitying smiles, silent reproaches, numerous questions and shocked responses. I believe that few marriages come under such close scrutiny as those of inmates and their spouses. There are many reasons for the questions, usually founded on a lifetime of media images. But as with other marriages, there are no generalizations that hold true for all prison marriages. There are, however, experiences all prison wives share.

During the four years I have visited my husband in prison—he is serving a 20-year sentence with a 10-year mandatory minimum for bank robbery—I have discovered an incredible support system among inmate wives. Some of the women have jobs; others receive public assistance. Many of them are single-handedly raising their children. Often it is the first time they have been on their own. One 50-year-old woman waiting to visit her husband described to me the first time she changed a light bulb in her oven and completed her income-tax form. Another talked about taking the family cow to be slaughtered. Yet there is a camaraderie among us. We come from different ethnic backgrounds and economic classes, but we understand each other. We understand that we have had to become strong.

Wives of prisoners must adjust to arbitrary treatment by prison guards and administrators who treat us as if we were criminals like our husbands. We are subjected to reprimands, searches and a multitude of bureaucratic requirements designed to discourage continued contact. One day, in the visiting room, I see a woman's hand slapped by a prison guard when she places it on her husband's knee. Another day, another woman is kept waiting for half of her three-hour visit as prison officials try to "fir 1" her husband and bring him to the visiting room. By the time he arrives, she is so upset the rest of the visit is ruined.

In learning to cope with the oppressiveness of prison, we learn about our husbands' experiences. Just as women in the workplace study the behavior of their bosses in order to

survive, we study the prison guards. We learn to use humor to vent our frustrations—and ways to channel our anger. Prison officials tend to discourage any type of networking among prisoners or their families. At the state penitentiary in Oregon there is a rule against "cross-visiting": one inmate's visitor can't visit with another inmate. When we ask if the rule can be changed in order to promote a positive "community" atmosphere, we are told that there is no community among prison families nor does the prison wish to facilitate one.

Yet over and over again, women who are total strangers assist each other with advice about transportation and child care—and the techniques to fight bureaucratic battles. Our desire to keep our marriages and families intact is a taxing one. Coping with the incarceration of a loved one is difficult and can often result in financial burdens, health problems and social ostracism. Divorce is common; not all prisoners react positively when their wives begin to take control over their own lives. Some marriages break down when the prisoner is released and both parties have difficulty adjusting to the changes they have undergone.

There are only seven states that allow conjugal visits between prisoners and their wives. Therefore, prison wives must struggle with decisions about their sexual lives. Some base their decisions on individual moral and religious beliefs and remain celibate. Some work out detailed agreements with their husbands which may allow extramarital liaisons. Others base such decisions on the amount of time their husbands will be incarcerated. It is not sex with their husbands which most wives miss most of all; it is the intimacy and privacy. They long to be touched and held.

Forgotten victims: But until now, many wives have hidden the fact they love someone in prison. That is beginning to change; they are learning that they are not alone. Organizations of prison wives are forming across the country, resulting in pressure for family-support groups, improved visitation conditions—including special playrooms where fathers can see their children—and better transition programs for released inmates. Studies show that inmates who maintain close family ties are less likely to commit crimes again.

But becoming involved in prison reform can be especially difficult for us. We must plan our actions carefully because we are always aware that our husbands are under the control of prison officials. Many small injustices must be ignored because prison guards have the power to harass and punish. Still, I believe that change is possible. Some prison officials have begun to recognize that family members are often forgotten victims in the criminal-justice system and that we can assist in an inmate's rehabilitation. We know that prison is a destructive experience for those we care about, and we want to help lessen the negative impact. We also want to make sure they never return to prison.

I know the importance of love and trust in my relationship with my husband: of living in optimistic hope of a better future. I savor the time I spend in conversation with him, and I learn new ways of expressing intimacy in a crowded public area. I only hope that other prison wives will become proud of their special stamina. I hope that they, too, will cultivate connections with community leaders so they don't become isolated and that they will join to form the bridge from inside the prison walls to the outside world. For only we can help others understand that we are not crazy to love those who have made past mistakes. And we, who are strong enough to care, can really help keep our mates from going back to jail.

A free-lance writer, Hedin, 33, is also president of Oregon People for Prison Alternatives.

Research & Reports

The Impact of Imprisonment on Black Families

The impact of the disproportionate imprisoning of Blacks, in particular Black men, on Black families, especially Black women, has received too little attention. In "Case Studies of the Impact of Separation Due to Incarceration on Black Families" (Ph.D. dissertation, School of Criminal Justice, S.U.N.Y. at Albany, November 1982), Alice P. Green examines the consequences of imprisonment on the families of ten Black male offenders.

The women Green interviewed for this study experienced significant emotional change as a result of their spouses' imprisonment. Frustration and stress often produced physical health problems. Deep emotional ties between imprisoned men and their wives were severely disturbed by separation. Child-rearing practices were also affected.

According to Green, "additional costs attached to the maintenance of contacts with the father/spouse contributed to economic hardships borne by the families." While the women continued to work (some increased their working time) or collect welfare as they had prior to their husbands' arrest and imprisonment, many discontinued their schooling.

The price of imprisonment only adds to the plight of individuals already injured by poverty and racism.

Green suggests that "(Black) families experience emotional stress and disorganization at the time of arrest. They are able to make a relatively quick recovery to a new level of organization. But at sentencing, families are almost totally unprepared for the reality of prison time (length of time, distance, location of prison, financial cost of visiting, etc.); they are plunged into a crisis situation from

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which they gradually recover to a new level of reorganization unlike that prior to the arrest, due primarily to the added hardships occasioned by prison visitations and other internal and external forces acting on the family."

One way to address this situation is through family impact statements contained in probation-based presentence reports. However, it is cause for concern "that presentence report recommendations for disposition of cases involving Black offenders may be biased in favor of imprisonment over probation. . . . When other factors, such as seriousness of offense and the number of prior convictions were held constant, both groups tended to recommend imprisonment more often for Blacks and probation more often for whites." In addition, "recommendations of probation agencies and the dispositions of courts tend to result in the disproportionate placement of married men on probation and unmarried men in prison. This screening process is based upon legal definitions of marriage and the mainstream dominant group notions of *stable and intact families*" (emphasis added). Therefore, "[p]robation officers and other decision-makers," Green states, "must be made to increase and improve their knowledge and understanding of ethnic and family cultures."

Green's study located the "existence of an identifiable prisoners' family subculture largely overlooked by human service workers and community leaders." Members of this group "have developed their own value system, they lend support to each other, and share scarce resources." It is essential that "[a]ll prisoners must be seen as members of families that are affected by imprisonment and represent a potential source of support to the offender and hence society."

According to Green, presentence reports can contribute to the reduction of "the number of non-violent black offenders who are sentenced to prison terms and removed from family units and networks that become severely damaged by their removal." The price of imprisonment only adds to the plight of "individuals already injured by poverty and racism."

The impact of imprisonment on juvenile, mentally ill, long-term, death row, women, Black and Hispanic, and released prisoners is explored in The Pains of Imprisonment, a series of research articles collected by Robert Johnson and Hans Toch. This volume can be obtained from Sage Publications, Inc., 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212; 213/274-8003 for \$12.50 (paper).

Black Mothers in Prison

by Dr. Velma LaPoint, Ph.D.

The literature on incarcerated mothers and their children indicates racial, class, and gender issues in the areas of research, policy and services. The purpose of this article is to highlight some of these issues as they pertain to incarcerated Black mothers and their children.

Black women represent almost 50 percent of women incarcerated in state and Federal prisons in the United States. Almost 80 percent of all incarcerated women are mothers. Approximately 225,000 children had incarcerated mothers in 1980. It appears, therefore, that Black mothers and children constitute an overwhelming proportion of all imprisoned mothers and children.

Many scholars point to racial discrimination in the judicial system and poor

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socio-economic conditions as causes for the large number of incarcerated Black women. In fact, the political nature of the definition of socially deviant behavior and



Rachel Burger/CPF

of racial discrimination in the criminal justice system has prompted a number of experts to advocate major structural changes in society.

Black mothers are poor, single parents with limited education and vocational skills. Women in prison are generally convicted of blue collar, property-related crimes, or those that violate traditional standards of femininity, such as prostitution. Such crimes generally reflect the social and economic position of women in society.

While it is popularly believed that women fare better than men in the criminal justice system due to the "chivalry factor," i.e. criminal justice officials supposedly show more leniency towards females than males, data indicates that this factor benefits some women more than others. White middle- or upper-class women rarely encounter the penal system.

continued, page 4

Mothers, continued from page 3

For mothers (and their children) who do encounter the system, however, the effects of parent-child separation resemble other forms of loss. Feelings and behaviors of mothers have been characterized by remoteness, helplessness, anger, guilt and fears of rejection. Children often respond with aggressive or withdrawn behavior, poor marks in school, and strained relationships with other children and adults.

Research on this subject has increased in recent years. However, it has many conceptual, methodological and interpretative problems. This issue becomes more significant given the Black ethnicity of most mothers in prison. Racial, cultural and class factors influence individual and family functioning. One result of existing research is that it may foster negative stereotypes of Black mothers and their children similar to much existing research on Black families.

Despite the inadequacy of most research, programs and policies that attempt to deal with these problems have begun to be implemented within the prison setting. These include: education in parenting skills (some of which is linked to vocational training); legal services in the area of parent-child custody issues; counseling programs for both mother and child; and institutional accommodation of children to be near their mothers.

Decarceration

Ironically, reducing the incidence of incarcerated mothers is rarely raised as a preventive strategy. A majority of incarcerated women are serving sentences for property and other non-violent offenses. Alternatives to incarceration, such as restitution and community service, might be far more appropriate sentences for such offenders.

Ironically, reducing the incidence of incarcerated mothers is rarely raised as a preventive strategy

Programs which seek to reduce mother and child problems by permitting children to reside with incarcerated mothers in traditional correctional settings require careful assessment. Research indicates that a majority of Black children reside with extended families during their mothers' incarceration. The benefits of removing children from extended families to institutions for therapeutic purposes are questionable at best. Such programs can inadvertently teach children to accept their prison residence, and encourage a psychological, social or economic dependence on the institution for both mothers and children.

Within the mental health field there is a

trend towards the de-institutionalization of certain client populations. On the other hand, within the criminal justice system there is a trend towards the increased confinement of individuals convicted of serious crimes. However, it appears contradictory to institutionalize children who have not been convicted of crimes under the rubric of rehabilitation of mothers.

If facilities are improved or constructed for residential programs involving children of imprisoned mothers, questions may be raised concerning subsequent judicial procedures. Will officials sentence mothers to these facilities more frequently, and for longer periods of time, rather than seek appropriate alternatives to sending the mother to prison?

The large proportion of Black and low-income incarcerated mothers suggests a need for policies and programs which reflect cultural and social class factors and differences. Particularly, such programs must address legal statutes relating to maternal imprisonment as cause for terminating the mother's custody altogether. The highest priorities of social service and criminal justice programs should be prevention, deinstitutionalization, and alternatives to incarceration. Attempts to "improve" prison conditions raise a number of unanswered questions and may actually prove harmful for incarcerated Black mothers and their children.

Long-term Offenders in the Pennsylvania Correctional System,
Buchanan, R., Unger, C. and Mazouch, R., Correctional
Services Group, Inc., Suite 3 South, 4149 Pennsylvania Ave.,
Kansas City, MO 64111-3065, September 1983, pg. 56.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Long-term offenders were asked to choose from a list of twelve problem areas, those they believed affected the long-term offender to a greater extent than short-term offenders. The most frequently cited problems, in descending order, appear in Table 5.

TABLE 5

PROBLEMS THAT DISTINGUISH LONG-TERM OFFENDERS FROM SHORT-TERM OFFENDERS

<u>PROBLEM</u>	<u>RESPONDENTS (%)</u>
Maintenance of Family Contacts	84
Restriction of Privileges	68
Lack of Programs (Due to Eligibility Requirements)	68
Adjustment to Long-Term Confinement	63
Lack of Long-Range Planning	58
Monotony/Boredom	53
Sense of Hopelessness	53
Maintenance of Skills	50

Some interesting differences in perspectives appear when the responses are analyzed by the type of long-term offender responding; that is, whether or not the offender is an adult male or female, an adult male or youthful adult male or an adult male in the early to middle stages of a long-term or an adult male who is in the final years of his sentence.

No matter which type of offender was responding, more of each group of long-term offenders believed maintenance of family contacts was a more important problem than any other problem listed that distinguished long- from short-term offenders.