

Federal Probation

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United States Pretrial Services Supervision..... *Probation and Pretrial Services Division*

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Restorative Justice: Implications for Organizational Change..... *Mark S. Umbreit*
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This Issue in Brief

Three Strikes and You're Out: The Political Sentencing Game.—Recent sentencing initiatives which mandate life sentences for three-time convicted felons may appeal to the public, but will they address the realities of crime? Authors Peter J. Benekos and Alida V. Merlo focus on the latest spin on sentencing: "three strikes and you're out." Their article reviews the ideological and political context of recent sentencing reforms, examines "get-tough" sentencing legislation in three states, and considers the consequences of increasing sentencing severity.

Electronic Monitoring in the Southern District of Mississippi.—Although many criminal justice agencies now use electronic monitoring as an alternative to prison, some still hesitate to use it in supervising higher risk offenders. Author Darren Gowen explains how the U.S. probation office in the Southern District of Mississippi began its electronic monitoring program with limited expectations but successfully expanded it for use with higher risk offenders. He describes the district's first year of experience with electronic monitoring and discusses the selection criteria, the types of cases, the supervision model, and offender demographics.

Helping Pretrial Services Clients Find Jobs.—Many pretrial services clients lose their jobs because they are involved in criminal matters; many have been either unemployed or underemployed for a long time. Some are released by the court with a condition to seek and maintain employment. Author Jacqueline M. Peoples describes how the U.S. pretrial services office in the Northern District of California addressed the issue of unemployment among its clients by launching a special project to identify employers willing to hire them. She also explains how the district developed an employment resource manual to help clients find jobs or training programs.

Specialist Foster Family Care for Delinquent Youth.—Authors Burt Galaway, Richard W. Nutter, Joe Hudson, and Malcolm Hill contend that the current focus on treatment-oriented or specialist foster family care as a resource for emotionally or psychiatrically impaired children and youths may disguise its

potential to serve delinquent youngsters. They report the results of a survey of 266 specialist foster family care programs in North America and the United Kingdom. Among their findings were that 43 percent of the programs admitted delinquent youths and that the delinquents were as likely to be successful in the programs as were nondelinquent youths.

United States Pretrial Services Supervision.—In June 1994 the Probation and Pretrial Services Division, Administrative Office of the United States

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Restorative Justice: Implications for Organizational Change

BY MARK S. UMBREIT, PH.D., AND MARK CAREY*

MOVING A corrections system to embrace a new paradigm of justice is no easy task. It requires creative leadership and vision. It also requires a highly disciplined, long-term commitment to implementing a new approach through a collaborative process involving all staff members. This article reports on the journey toward restorative justice through systemic change in the Dakota County Community Corrections Department in Minnesota.

Correctional systems are offender driven, with little attention given to the needs facing individual victims or the victimized community. Even in those jurisdictions attempting to respond more effectively to victim needs, the emphasis tends to be upon the importance of offenders paying restitution to victims, often in the context of restitution payment being therapeutic for the offender. Rarely are victims given the opportunity to play a more active role in the justice process (Marshall & Merry, 1990; Umbreit, 1994b, 1991; Wright, 1991; Zehr, 1990).

The criminal justice system is focused upon the state as the victim, with the actual individual victim being placed in a very passive role and having little input. In the criminal justice system, adversarial relationships and processes are normative, as is the imposition of severe punishment in order to deter or prevent future crime. The fact that criminal behavior represents interpersonal conflict is ignored. The manner in which the criminal justice system frequently deals with victims and offenders often heightens the conflict.

There is an increasing national interest, however, in embracing the principles of a different paradigm of justice. "Restorative justice" (Bazemore, 1994; Umbreit, 1994a; Zehr, 1990) views crime as a violation of one person by another, rather than as a violation against the state. Dialogue and negotiation are typical, with a focus upon problem-solving for the future rather than establishing blame for past behavior.

Severely punishing offenders is less important than providing opportunities to empower victims in their search for closure through gaining a better understanding of what happened and being able to move on with their lives, to impress upon offenders the real

human impact of their behavior, and to promote restitution to victims (Umbreit, 1994a). Zehr (1990) notes that instead of ignoring victims and placing both victims and offenders in passive roles, restorative justice principles place both the victim and the offender in active and interpersonal problem-solving roles.

These principles of restorative justice are now being seen in a growing number of communities throughout North America and Europe. In the past, advocates of restorative justice tended to focus on specific program initiatives in local communities. Today, restorative justice is more frequently being advocated in the context of broad systemic change in entire correctional systems. The Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) project, supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice, is the clearest example of such system change advocacy. The BARJ project is working intensively with five juvenile corrections systems in various parts of the country in an effort to initiate fundamental change in the manner in which those justice systems operate.

Restorative justice has tapped into a stream of energy and excitement within corrections departments nationwide. For many, this energy has remained inert for years under the pressures of changing public expectations, legislative mandates, public safety demands, and escalating probation caseloads. Probation departments are re-discovering the personal and professional motivations for their staffs entering the corrections field. Typically, those motivations are to promote offender change, to assist crime victims toward wholeness, and to make individual communities safer. For too long, the emphasis has been on surveillance and monitoring instead of those tenets brought forth by restorative justice principles such as competency development within the offender, victim participation and services, offender accountability, and community involvement and responsibility. Discovering this energy is a promising beginning for productive changes in corrections, but it is not enough. Planning for system changes in a bureaucratic organization is not easy even in the most fertile environments. Multiple barriers exist, ranging from workload to politics.

Dakota County is part of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, located just south of Minneapolis. With a population of 310,000, it is one of the fastest growing counties in the state. The Dakota County Community Corrections Department was selected as

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one of five jurisdictions nationwide to receive technical assistance through the BARJ project. Consultation services and training were provided for the purpose of helping the department learn about, and adopt, policies and programs consistent with restorative justice principles.

Dakota County is now 1 year into its planning process and is about to implement a number of practical restorative justice recommendations. The purpose of this article is to illustrate some of the planning activities needed to prepare the department for fundamental changes in the approach to and delivery of restorative services. That is not to suggest that there is only one way. Each agency has different resources, assets, deficits, priorities, motivations, and system environments that require varying approaches to planning changes. The authors hope this article will help flesh out some of the issues that agencies should think through and the activities they should undertake in a restorative justice planning process.

Preparing for Change

Perhaps the biggest mistake many organizations make when attempting to adopt restorative justice principles is miscalculating what a restorative justice agency is. Too often, restorative justice is viewed as a program such as victim-offender mediation or community work service or seen as a politically correct way of naming the activities already in place in probation departments. As a result, real changes don't take place. A new program is developed or an existing program is re-named and yet the desired outcomes are only achieved superficially, if at all.

Restorative justice is a way of thinking. It is a fundamentally different framework for understanding and responding to crime and victimization in communities. Correctional systems adopting a restorative justice approach are no longer driven by offender concerns only. Instead, they acknowledge the need for a three-dimensional response involving victims, offenders, and the community. Once correctional agencies clearly understand restorative justice, their activities will naturally follow it. However, agencies can't plunk down the latest restorative justice program and think that they are now performing restorative corrections. The transition is easier if agencies have staff members who "think restorative justice" and if they develop policies that have a clear purpose which brings about wholeness in victims, offenders, and communities.

An illustration might be helpful. A supervisor of a probation intake unit has hired a new probation officer who will be writing presentence investigation reports. Often in such a situation, the tendency is to train the officer by explaining what the headings are in the report, when the report is due, and the various do's and

don'ts. When we do this, we are describing the activities we want accomplished. We also do this when explaining probation contact standards. The probation officer is told how often each offender is required to be seen for the corresponding risk level. Rarely do we discuss what is the purpose of the investigative report or the offender contact. What is the outcome we are looking for? How does the desired outcome respond to needs of individual victims and the victimized community? If we simply describe the activities we expect the new officer to complete, we are not encouraging the new officer to think independently. Therefore, every time a new circumstance arises, the officer needs to consult with the supervisor in order to determine what the supervisor expects in that circumstance. We free up our personnel when we allow them to understand and work toward the restorative justice outcome and not simply perform a set of tasks.

Staff members in correctional agencies will not behave the way we want them to until we stop telling them how to act and instead tell them who they are and what outcomes we are looking for in their work. When we tell the probation officer that he or she is a restoration officer who is responsible for bringing about repair to the victim, competency development in the offender, and safety to the community, we have defined who the officer is and what outcomes we expect. That individual then is freed up to do his or her job and is less preoccupied with the specific activities which may or may not bring the department closer to meeting restorative justice goals. Despite the volatile nature of crime, there are very few circumstances where the restorative justice "roadmap" won't allow the officer to determine the best course of action.

Restorative justice is a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way of measuring. Until we change the way we think about why probation exists, we can't change our behavior. We can't measure the changes until our behavior changes.

One of the first steps in preparing for a restorative justice planning process is making sure that the agency leadership understands what restorative justice is. On the surface, the concept seems simple enough. In practice, it is much more difficult. Often, people grasp the concept but are not sure how the concept is put into practice. As with so many conceptual frameworks, one can justify most activities depending on one's understanding and emphasis on parts of the framework. Understanding a new conceptual framework requires careful study and discussion through readings, conferences, and intrastaff dialogue. It is often the skeptics of the organization who can be most helpful in the preparation stage. The skeptic might be the one to ask, "Why are we doing this? What is not working properly and needs to be

fixed? How is this really different from what we are doing now?" These questions test the leadership's knowledge of the concept and help identify the concerns agency staff might have.

It is useful for the agency leadership to examine the existing organizational readiness for change. Is the agency ripe for positive change? What are the risks that might result in triggering momentum toward negative change? How motivated is the staff for change of any kind? What pressures exist that might make the timing for the planning process good or bad? Janssen (1987) speaks of organizational change in the context of a "Four-Room Apartment." These "apartments" or stages are: (1) contentment, (2) renewal, (3) denial, and (4) confusion. The collective staff attitude about the agency mission and direction and the staff understanding of the need for change are usually predominantly in one of these stages. When organizational change occurs, it tends to move in a circular motion from the upper left to the bottom right (i.e., from contentment to denial to confusion to renewal and back to contentment again). Naturally, the organization is most motivated for change in the confusion and renewal stages. Restorative justice provides a compelling reason for an organization to move into the renewal stage, which is often characterized by vibrancy, excitement, energy, and creativity. The actual organizational approach to restorative justice, however, should differ depending on the current stage of the organization. For example, if the agency is in the denial stage, the organization will need a great deal of time to discuss what isn't working well and the reasons to initiate change.

Agency workload can be a major barrier to an open discussion of the merits of a restorative justice planning process. When staff members are burdened by ever-increasing workloads, it can be extremely difficult even to initiate the discussion. Staff members tend to view it as yet another meeting added to their workday which prevents them from getting their job done. On the other hand, workload can be a motivating factor. Many probation officers have begun to realize that the caseload pressures have taken away job satisfaction and overall probation effectiveness. Given tight budgets and limited resources, relief from the burgeoning workload is not likely to be provided soon. These circumstances can be a major motivating factor, making an organization ready for change. Agency circumstances must be considered before initiating a planning process. The question of how the time invested in restorative justice planning will benefit the department, the clients served, and individual staff work must be answered before a planning process may successfully be launched.

The Trial Balloon

After agency leaders make an organizational assessment of readiness, they must introduce the restorative

justice concept to the agency staff through a variety of presentations and smaller discussion groups. Since such a planning effort will affect every staff position represented both horizontally and vertically across the department, all staff members need to be exposed to an overview of the restorative justice framework, preferably simultaneously. It is helpful to answer the question "Why?" at this point. Why would the department undergo a large-scale planning process and invest up to hundreds of hours of staff time for what appears to be an abstract concept? Possible questions for management to expect include: What needs to be changed? How would this improve services? How would this help me with my workload? Am I going to be expected to increase services to victims when I can't deliver sufficient services to offenders? If the community is supposed to be more involved, who is going to take the responsibility to foster that involvement? Are my day-to-day job responsibilities going to change? Is this planning process voluntary on my part?

These questions should not imply that the workforce will view restorative justice in a negative light. More often, probation staffs respond with enthusiasm and hope. It makes sense to them, especially as it becomes obvious that the social problems are becoming more complex and the criminal justice system can't be expected to be the sole response to the problem. Nonetheless, the agency director should expect a number of practical questions that seek to bridge the intellectual gap between the abstract concept which delivers well on promise and the detailed answers to "how does it affect me?"

At this introduction stage the agency may be most vulnerable to adopting quick fixes. The staff members most excited by the restorative justice framework will want to channel their energy into work products. Those intrigued by the concept but overwhelmed by current day-to-day activities will seek short-term solutions such as replicating a successful program started in another jurisdiction. Managers will be attracted to quick responses to avoid protracted planning processes that consume inordinate amounts of time. However, this is the time to exercise maximum discipline and self-restraint. The agency director can recognize staff time constraints by offering a longer planning timeframe. Many staff members will welcome a longer timeframe so that they can study the matter further and be involved in the planning process if they are offered the opportunity. Since restorative justice is a new way of thinking and of organizing agency activities, it requires a lengthy period of time to understand and implement. It takes time to anticipate and plan for the fallout of major changes. Quick changes will result in problematic chain reactions which can jeopardize the positive change environ-

ment. The challenge to the agency director is to keep the excitement vibrant while holding back any "quick fixes."

Setting the Stage

Changing the way we think as individuals is not easy. We have a patterned way of conceptualizing and responding to events. It is no different with an agency and can be exacerbated by the diversity of the staff. Each organization has a culture of its own, a milieu which tends to perpetuate certain behaviors and attitudes and to discourage others. To alter this culture takes time and forethought. There are three "cultural shift rules of thumb" which can help in the planning process.

1. Involve all the staff members and support them.

Agency leadership cannot sustain a long-term cultural shift by fiat. It is the staff members who deliver the core services. They will either agree with, and act on, restorative justice or they won't. An internally motivated individual is nearly always better at delivering the product than one externally motivated. Ownership of an agency mission and its outcome is best accomplished when the "stakeholders" in that agency have been a part of defining that mission and outcome.

It's not enough to encourage staff members to participate. Often, barriers exist which prevent full participation. They may be large workloads or inconvenient scheduled meeting times. Staff members may require management reassurance that input is genuinely sought, even if the staff members' ideas are contrary to those of the administration. Most of us as employees seek both formal and informal permission to get involved and express opinions openly without fear of retaliation or labeling. Staff members need to know that the agency is interested in improving services, that staff members are in the best position to offer ideas that work given their direct experience, and that management is willing to reduce barriers that might prohibit them from participating. It is not necessary for all staff members to be involved in the planning process, but involvement of a large portion of the agency is helpful. These staff members will later become the groundswell of support and initiative.

There will always be, however, a small percentage of employees who will not offer input and who will disparage attempts to improve services. It's important to give these employees a chance to express their views and to attempt to accommodate any legitimate concerns, but not to allow unproductive criticism to lead to an erosion of the planning process.

2. Take time.

There are no shortcuts to good planning, especially when it involves a foundational change (or enhance-

ment) of correctional philosophy or principles. Restorative justice threatens existing thinking patterns, and staff members need time to reflect on its principles, challenge its assumptions, and test its application.

For some, concepts must come from different sources in order to be credible. The technical assistance provided to Dakota County through the BARJ project was invaluable. Consultants from other jurisdictions presented information and demonstrated that restorative justice principles can be put into practice with positive results. Newspaper accounts, quotes from noncorrectional personnel, and other sources all helped convey the message that restorative justice is not a whimsical fancy but a concept that has captured the curiosity, and often the support, of professionals of many disciplines.

3. Communicate, communicate, and communicate.

There can be no substitute for consistent and thorough communication. When workload increases, often the communication flow gets clogged and ineffective. Probation staff may be unaware of administrative planning activities and the time devoted to them. Assumptions are made about what is, or is not, happening. The administration makes assumptions about what is important to the staff. Constant communication is the only sure way to know how restorative justice is being received by personnel. This communication includes giving information, keeping the staff aware of planning efforts, and listening to staff observations, concerns, and ideas.

It is helpful to set up both formal and informal avenues for discussions on restorative justice. Staff members can be encouraged to attend outside training on the subject. Brown bag luncheons can be organized. Also, spontaneous discussions about restorative justice can often lead to excellent innovative thoughts. As one staff member noted, even "bad ideas are better than no ideas at all."

The Wind Test

The planners who are exploring the ideas and implications of restorative justice for the department will become the internal experts. They will understand the concept and begin to imagine how it can be implemented. A collective vision will begin to emerge. As the staff planners spend more time on the subject, the tendency will be to lose touch with those staff members who chose not to participate in the planning process. Periodic "wind tests" are helpful to assess whether the planners are getting too far ahead of the staff body.

These wind tests might include sending out a memo describing the status of the planning project and inviting staff members either to sit in on a planning meet-

ing or to express thoughts in writing or verbally. The agency might want to send out a survey (with a quick checklist format, along with an open-ended section for those who want to elaborate) to gauge how well staff members understand the restorative justice concept, whether they agree with it, and whether they have any other thoughts that would be useful to the planners. This reality check helps the planning group determine whether additional information is needed or if certain barriers or opportunities exist that need to be attended to. Some examples of Dakota County staff comments on such a survey early in the planning process included:

- In my opinion, restorative justice not only aids the victim, community, and the offender, but would help unify this department. It would give us all a clearer mission and therefore a more consistent response from us.
- I think it is a way of thinking about correctional practice which is respectful toward offenders and victims.
- We shouldn't do the victim services piece.
- I agree with the general concepts but still question how this will be put into practice.
- Restorative justice tends to be simplistic. A cure-all answer/replacement to direct supervision, punitive consequences, and to supervising or monitoring increasingly large numbers of clients with insufficient staff.
- I am encouraged that the department is headed in this direction.
- Victims should have as much service as possible. I hope we will have a unit to specifically deal with restitution and additional informational services to be provided for them.
- Thanks for the opportunity to speak out as a department and wanting our input.

Communicating the results of the staff feedback is helpful. Staff members may or may not know how the rest of their colleagues are viewing the planning direction. It is useful to let them know that they are not alone in their concerns or to make them aware that there is a great deal of excitement about the potential benefits to the department.

The longer an agency studies restorative justice and considers possible recommendations, the more some staff members will want someone to come out and announce the changes that are to take place. Most of us don't like working in an environment in which there is an awareness that "something" is about to take place, but what that something is, and when it will happen, is unclear. Such an atmosphere is anxiety-producing. Management must resist this pressure to make quick decisions, to "decide and move on," or it can undermine the grassroots ownership process of the planning efforts. However, staff members must be given reassurances that the planning process will not be prolonged beyond a reasonable timeframe and that they will receive opportunities to have their input considered before any final recommendations are im-

plemented. Failure to provide some of these reassurances will create department-wide anxiety which could grow into paranoia.

The Big Kick-Off

Perhaps what contributed most to the Dakota County BARJ Project success was the use of all-day "kick-offs" or training sessions with national consultants who were credible, who were knowledgeable about corrections, and who had implemented restorative justice principles in programs and policies within their agencies. The BARJ model emphasizes the need for greater balance in corrections by focusing on the objectives of offender competency development, offender accountability, and community safety while concurrently focusing on the emotional and material needs of individual victims and victimized communities. Dakota County scheduled two all-day sessions (about 9 weeks apart), one with the director of the Deschutes County, Oregon, Community Corrections Department on competency development, and one with the chief probation officer in Quincy, Massachusetts, on accountability and community safety.

The consultants both provided an overview of what restorative justice means to a corrections agency. These overviews helped reiterate the basic tenets of the framework, which need to be repeated in order to ensure more comprehensive learning. Both consultants provided practical examples of how restorative justice was implemented in their regions in order to promote one of the three objectives. It was useful to use two different consultants as both had different approaches to the concepts and different presentation styles, which meant that both reached a different segment of the staff attending.

The all-day sessions were divided into 1) a presentation of how restorative justice can promote specific objectives within the BARJ approach and 2) a staff brainstorming process on how Dakota County might implement policy and program changes. The brainstorming served the following purposes:

1. It actively involved all members of the staff.
2. It required staff members to think about how restorative justice could help the agency in practical ways.
3. It gave staff members power over the department's future.
4. It tested the staff's understanding of restorative justice.
5. It provided the base from which to start action groups.

At the end of the second all-day consultation, the department staff had a more complete understanding of restorative justice and was beginning to envision

how the department might deliver services differently if restorative justice provided the philosophical underpinnings of the agency's activities. At this time, staff members were solicited to volunteer for one of three action groups focusing on either competency development, accountability, or community safety. Approximately 50 percent of the department staff volunteered to serve on one of the action groups.

Nuts and Bolts

One way to organize the staff planning effort is to divide the assignment into smaller, more focused work groups such as groups on community safety, competency development, and accountability. Dakota County staff members volunteered for a specific action group depending on which topic they thought they could contribute the most toward. Each group was to take the list of brainstormed ideas from the two all-day training sessions, debate the merits of them, and refine or reject them. The groups were to expand upon the recommendations that they believed had merit and submit them to management. The groups described each proposed action step in more detail, gave a means to reach the objective, and provided a timeline by which the action was to be completed and assigned to an individual department staff member who would be give the authority and responsibility to implement it.

The management provided each action group with a booklet that summarized the ideas generated and a list of guidelines designed to assist group members in staying on task and completing assignments. As few "rules" as possible were given in order to maximize the creativity of the staff groups. Some rules were necessary. For example, many ideas were expressed which may have benefited the department but were not linked to restorative justice. To keep the tasks focused, the groups understood that each recommendation was to somehow bring the department closer to a restorative justice corrections system. If an idea could not be articulated in that context, the idea was set aside for further consideration outside of the BARJ project.

Of particular importance was that resource constraints were removed. Creativity can be stifled when lack of resources is mentioned each time an idea is expressed. A well-designed concept that appears, on the surface, to necessitate a large infusion of time or money can often be implemented with few additional resources. This can be done by carrying out the idea in stages or shifting the existing resource allocation priorities. Removing the resource consideration freed up the staff to concentrate on restorative recommendations.

Given the breadth of the staff planning effort, Dakota County set up a Restorative Justice Steering

Committee made up of two action group representatives from each of the three groups and administrative staff. The steering committee solicited thoughts, concerns, and ideas from the staff, explored common themes, and served as troubleshooters to address potential problems. When confusion arose, the steering committee discussed the issue and clarified the matter through the action group representative. In addition, it was discovered that some restorative justice action steps did not fit neatly into any of the three action groups established. For example, the proposals for determining outcome measures and promoting community involvement required discussion outside of the action groups. Therefore, the steering committee took on the roles of consultant to the action groups, addressing potential problems and devising department-wide recommendations that were greater in scope.

Creating a Vision

Once the restorative justice recommendations are developed enough to explain their practicality to all staff, the groundwork for the next stage is laid. In Dakota County, a vision of where the department wanted to be 5 years later was needed. It was not enough to understand restorative justice and to have a series of recommended action steps to implement. The department needed a compelling vision of what the staff activities and outcomes should look like further ahead. This vision would help carry the agency toward its goal. Rather than just a potpourri of restorative justice recommendations, the staff needed to visualize what services would actually be like if the staff pushed ahead as planned.

All staff members involved in the action groups were invited to a "vision assembly." It was an all-day event at which staff members were to create a vision using the ideas proposed by the three action groups. The invitees were given this task:

Imagine that the Dakota County Community Corrections Department no longer exists. All of you have mysteriously evaporated. There are no units. All of the equipment remains, but the staff is gone. There is no history. There is only the future. You have been asked to create a community corrections department that is restorative in design. All other parts of the criminal justice system remain the same—the same judges, attorneys, social services, etc. The "system" practices remain the same, but how you might respond to those practices may change. You can keep the same organizational structure or alter it altogether. Whatever your model looks like, the only requirement is that it must fit a restorative justice framework.

The staff was divided into three groups, with each group assigned the same task. Staff members divided themselves into groups depending on how they classified their current views on what the department should look like in 5 years. The three groups were:

The Tinkerers (those who ascribed to the opinion that the agency only needed to tinker with existing services, organizational structure, and policies), The Radicals (those who wanted to sharply diverge from existing practice), and The Moderates (those in between the two extremes). Each group then documented its vision.

Surprisingly, the similarities in how the three groups viewed the vision were far more common than the differences. More amazing was the fact that the Tinkerers were more apt to sharply change the department than the Radicals were. A collective vision began to emerge with the group as items of agreement were pulled together. This consensus became the foundation for the proposed vision and ultimately the final action plan. The vision was given to the steering committee to finalize the details before presenting it to the full staff.

Preparing for the Unveiling

The final stage of the change process included a session with one of the national consultants who had undergone similar planning efforts and a presentation to all of the staff for feedback and further refinement. By now in the process, there should be no surprises. Management has communicated with staff members all through the process. Opportunities for input and feedback have been provided. The staff has been anticipating the final recommendations for some time. The time is right.

It is at this stage that things can unravel. Up to this point, no staff member has been immediately threatened with a change in his or her day-to-day work activities. No manager has been asked to change the way he or she manages the unit or supervises the unit staff. It is not uncommon for many of us to delay consideration of, or ignore altogether, those events that may never come to pass until they actually happen. At this stage it will be increasingly apparent that a staff member might be asked to do something that he or she has not done before or is not immediately competent to do without training and additional experience. For example, the probation officer may be requested to provide to the client competency development instruction instead of the traditional monitoring of the client's activities. This shift in emphasis means that the probation officer must learn a new set of skills. For many, this will represent an exciting change for the betterment of staff, client, and public. For others, it will cause anxiety and possibly fear.

Management should take into account these real concerns when it proposes the recommendations. It may appear as if the process has to start over, but such action won't be necessary. It does mean that some staff will once again need some time to think through the

implications that change will have for them. Patience and reassurance is helpful to get staff and supervisors through this stage. Piloting a significant change with a subset of the staff can be a way of working through both the potential pitfalls that come with any change and the anxieties.

What About the Rest of the System?

This article was written for the corrections administrator or planner who is seeking to initiate a planning effort in his or her corrections agency. Beginning a planning process for an entire criminal justice system would be a good subject for a different article. It would, however, be useful to comment here on the importance of including all the agencies in the criminal justice system when planning for restorative justice. Corrections is part of an interdependent system. Change in one part of the system affects other agencies in that system. Attempts to accomplish objectives can be thwarted or enhanced depending on the level of understanding and cooperation between each of the agencies.

Judicial commitment to restoration, for example, can be a key factor in how well a corrections agency meets its restorative objectives. If a corrections agency develops a victim/offender mediation program, for example, which is not supported by the judiciary, the program can fail quickly. On the other hand, if the court supports restorative concepts, a type of synergy can occur, resulting in system-wide application of restorative principles.

Any thorough planning effort should include efforts at educating system representatives on restorative justice and provide opportunities for their input. These efforts should not be limited to the criminal justice system. A key tenet in restorative justice is that the community become more involved in correctional matters at all stages. The community contains the primary players who can prevent crime. And, when crime does occur, the community can intercede in 1) providing the victim assistance, support, and security, and 2) providing for offender accountability and opportunities for productive change.

In fact, restorative justice planning without significant involvement of community leaders and neighborhood activists falls short of comprehensive restoration. Communities are more motivated to get involved in crime matters today than perhaps ever before in modern history. As do corrections professionals, citizens need a framework from which to think about crime, its causes, and effective interventions. Although citizens are an important resource for corrections, they have not been tapped to a significant extent until recently.

Concluding Remarks

Restorative justice provides a helpful framework for understanding crime and its consequences in a far more

balanced perspective. Instead of being offender driven, it leads to policies and interventions that also address the needs of individual victims and victimized communities. Restorative justice emphasizes the importance of holding offenders personally accountable for their criminal behavior while maximizing opportunities for the active involvement of victims and community members in the justice process (Bazemore, 1994, 1992; Dignan, 1990; Maloney, Romig, & Armstrong, 1988; Marshall & Merry, 1990; Umbreit & Coates, 1993, 1992; Umbreit, 1994a, 1994b, 1989; Wright, 1991; Zeir, 1990).

Moving a corrections department to adopt restorative justice as its mission requires creative leadership, vision, and maximum involvement of all agency staff through continual two-way communication. The journey toward a more balanced and restorative justice system also requires a deep commitment to long-term systemic change that is grounded in a spirit of collaboration, renewal, and hope.

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