

DEPARTMENT OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION

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PRELIMINARY COUNTY COUNSELING
PROGRAM EVALUATION



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INTRODUCTION

This report is really two reports: an analysis of a questionnaire administered to the county correctional wardens in May and June of 1978 and a report on the impact of the county counseling program in terms of the institutional behavior of inmates in these institutions. The goal of the overall study as stated in the evaluation design of the County Counseling Grant is to "assess the impact of the county counseling program on the daily lives of the offenders assigned to these institutions."

In conducting an evaluation of the county program, our goal has been from the beginning to assist all of the parties to the agreement in refining their expectations for the program. In doing this, we hoped that we could document what the wardens in the institutions expected and compare that to what central administration and staff of DOR prescribed in the grant application. The survey is an attempt to measure the degree of agreement between DOR and the county managers themselves about the program its goals and its program focus.

The second goal of the evaluation is to help the State Crime Commission and the Department of Offender Rehabilitation to determine if providing counseling in county institutions positively affects offenders' behavior. We utilized several indicators that were suggested in the evaluation design to measure offender behavior. In terms of short-term or more immediate outcomes, we looked at the disciplinary reports of the inmates in the county institutions and escape attempts in these institutions. As a more long range indicator, we looked at the return-to-prison rates for institutions which have had this program and those which have not. The factor that, of course, holds this part of the evaluation together with the survey of expectations is that the outcomes in terms of the clients'

behavior are themselves expectations. One of the questions which we asked the county wardens was whether or not these kinds of indicators of what we have previously called "positive institutional climate" were fair indicators of the effectiveness of the counseling program.

Once the preliminary information was completed, we decided to take the evaluation one step further. Not all of the services provided in the county camps can be assumed to be of equal quality. Some of the services are new, and some are provided by only part-time counselors. So we decided to try to group the county programs by quality and measure the impact of the program in the long-term consistent full-time counseling programs, in some of the intermediate quality institutional programs, and in the most short-term part-time counseling programs. Our purpose in doing this was to try to use the evaluation as a mechanism for looking out into the future to determine if a well-run counseling program as we understand it today in a county camp offers a prospect for policy-makers and funding agencies that is attractive. We felt that we could not do this by aggregating all of the institutions together. We needed an additional step in the analysis, and so this is provided in the second part of the report as well.

Even though we have gone a little beyond the first year's evaluation goals as outlined in the County Counseling Grant, our research and our analysis so far are very preliminary. Not only are we dealing with a program where we have only begun to itemize managers' expectations of what can be done with counseling, but we are also dealing in areas where our methodology is having to be developed as we go. For example, our classification of programs into quality categories might be valid or might not be valid. It is simply the case that everything in this preliminary piece of work is exploratory. We hope that individuals in

our wide audience will find the report to be helpful, but it certainly is not definitive. In the years to come we are going to need to get a much more specific and sophisticated view of the complex interaction of programs and work in institutions that are designed primarily for offenders who have needs that can be met in a work setting.

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

In May of 1978, the Office of Research and Evaluation at DOR mailed a brief questionnaire to each of the county wardens that had had experience with this program. In working out the details of the questionnaire with the Institutional Operations Division at DOR, we focused on several areas where this agency had professional or administrative expectations about the program. We also attempted to include areas of general correctional interest and local institutional operating interest in an attempt to find out what additional expectations the local officials had about the program.

Generally, the questionnaire asks about case management practices and duties, responsibilities; family conferences, drug counseling, long term individual counseling, and other kinds of professional duties; administrative functions such as disciplinary committee duty and court hearings; the coordination of self-improvement activities by the inmates such as a library or a recreation program or on-the-job training; and finally some of the expectations for what the outcome of the services offered at each institution might be in terms of escapes, disciplinary reports, and other behaviors in the institutional environment.

Working with the Institutional Operations Division, we mailed the questionnaires and had them returned to the District Directors in that division as a quality check to make sure that all responses were together and completely filled out, and these were forwarded to our office. We had twenty-six responses to the questionnaire, and only one institution that we contacted failed to respond.

All of the respondents to the ETS series of questions thought that the counselors should be expected to review diagnostic information for completeness. There was some considerable disagreement that these counselors should provide an Extended Assessment if one is not available in the package, but beyond that there is a great deal of agreement on developing a plan, submitting the plan to the Classification Committee and maintaining performance records in regard to the plan. Noting performance exceptions and processing these performance exception reports drew once again some six non-agreeing responses, the same number as in the case of providing Extended Assessments. Yet the other Earned Time actions seemed to be among the expectations of these staff such as awarding privileges and preparing Quarterly Summaries and Parole Summaries. By and large, with the exception of developing Assessments where none of the offender and processing Performance Exception Reports, there seemed to be nearly universal agreement that the standard Earned Time procedures should be the major duties of these counselors.

When one comes to the area of general counseling duties, however, much less agreement is found. Of the twenty-six cases with complete sets of responses, four did not agree that drug and alcohol counseling should be done by these counselors. All of the institutions thought that family assistance should be provided in terms of family conferences, correspondence, phone calls, and other interactions between the inmates and their families. In the area of vocational and educational guidance, six of the institutions thought that was outside of the counselor's legitimate duties and responsibilities. So in these first three areas of counseling services, the support was rather soft, as in the case of the least supportive responses in the Earned Time battery of questions.

The questioning of the county superintendents about short-term individual counseling got us back on firmer ground. The superintendents thought that scheduled conferences to discuss informal grievances or to talk about performance problems, or just to talk about personal problems was well within their expectations of this counseling staff. In the case of long-term individual counseling--more formal sessions providing treatment for identified growth needs or other individual needs of offenders--there was less emphasis on the part of the county wardens. Six thought that this was not a necessary task. In the area of group counseling--actually conducting groups to therapeutically deal with problems of offenders--twelve of the twenty-six respondents thought that this was not within their realm of expectations for the counselors. So they were very clearly limited in their support for this activity, at least as reported in the survey responses.

In the area of administrative duties that might be expected of the counselor, there was limited support for most of these activities. All but five of the twenty-six respondents thought that the counselor should serve as a member of the Classification Committee in the county institution. This is generally consistent with practice in state institutions, and it would be difficult to not deal with the counselor in this context. So making him a member is a logical step. In terms of the Disciplinary Committee, ten of the twenty-six thought this was outside of the role of the counselor, and this once again is consistent with state institutional practice. This is primarily a security staff dominated committee.

In terms of maintaining any necessary correspondence with the court on individual inmate cases, all but five of those responding thought that this was an administrative activity for counselors. However, when it came

to attending court hearings on specific inmate cases or attending Parole Board hearings on specific cases, seventeen and fifteen of the twenty-six respondents respectively declined to include this in their realm of expectations for the counselor. Overall in the area of administration, it appears that the counselor would seem to be a valuable asset to the county institution in terms of helping to make classification decisions--especially doing that paper work--and also the paper work associated with the courts. There seems to be much less interest in this individual playing a role in the disciplinary process or in actually attending outside hearings dealing with the individual inmate cases.

The information which we have on the programs that are offered at the institutions is fragmentary. We listed several educational programs plus recreational activities, Guides to Better Living, and other sources of self-improvement activities that might be available at the institution. According to the responses that we got from the superintendents, there is a great deal of coordinating expectation on the part of the wardens concerning these programs. For example, in the area of education, it is the case that only three of the wardens expect the counselor to lead the Adult Basic Education class, but seventeen expected this individual to coordinate those activities, and only six did not have any expectations in the area of Adult Basic Education. A very similar pattern is evidenced in the case of GED preparation and on-the-job training. So in the area of education, the large majority of superintendents expect the counselors to coordinate these activities.

In the area of religious services--both the Bible Classes and the religious observances themselves--once again the expectation that the counselor will lead these is rare. Only one institution expects the

counselor to teach Bible Class, but about twenty of the respondents expect this service to be coordinated by the counselor, and only about five have no expectations in that area.

In the area of recreation, a little more unevenness in responses is observed. Eight superintendents expect the counselor to lead recreation programs while twelve expect the counselor to coordinate them, and six have no expectations in the recreation area. In terms of operating a library, only two expected this person to maintain the library, but seventeen expect this activity to be coordinated by the counselor, and seven do not expect the counselor to be involved in this activity. Guides to Better Living--doubtless standing in for several self-improvement kinds of courses--had the largest proportion of no expectations on the part of the superintendent. Four of the institutions expect the counselor to lead this activity, and eight expect the counselor to coordinate it. So, by and large in the programmatic area, it would seem to be the case that coordination of activity schedules, attendance, and resource persons is a major expectation on the part of the wardens at the county institutions.

The final question on the survey reads as follows: "One of the goals outlined in the grant is to reduce the instances of negative inmate behavior as evidenced by fewer escapes and disciplinary reports. Do you feel that reducing escapes and disciplinary reports agrees with you own expectations concerning the counseling program at your institution?" Of the twenty-six respondents, twenty-three said yes and only three said no to this question. We asked for further explanation if the person said no, and some of those remarks might be of interest to individuals reading this report.

One of those respondents filling out the questionnaire suggested that there simply was not enough research tying institutional counseling directly to escapes and disciplinary actions, especially in the case of minimal counseling services. This seems to be an extremely legitimate observation with which we would concur, and yet perhaps more information is available in the other two negative responses to the question. The second observation reads as follows:

Negative inmate behavior is not, as viewed from the counselors point of view, evidenced by escapes and disciplinary reports. Rather, it is prevalent in the marked lack of interest in self-improvement by individual inmates. The motivation towards self-improvement and rehabilitation is the primary concern of all programs offered in county penal institutions. There is no feasible method of counseling for or prevention of escapes and disciplinary reports. Further, the lack of or overabundance of either of these cannot be used as an accurate evaluation of success or failure of counseling programs.

The counseling program at any institution should have as its main objective the purpose of offering the opportunity and guidance to all inmates and the necessary means and obtainable goals required to return them to society as productive and concerned members of the community. To require that the counseling program reduce the incidence of negative behavior is self-destructive to any program of counseling. It would severely limit the scope, purpose and objectives of counseling programs and staff if their primary concern was the reduction of overt negative behavior. These matters are best handled by security personnel. While counseling programs are certainly involved in the alteration and identification of behavioral patterns, negative and positive, the reduction in the number of escapes and disciplinary reports is a very limited, very narrow approach to rehabilitation. It would be better to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs by positive factors such as the number of inmates receiving high school, technical or vocational certificates while incarcerated.

This second piece of feedback is also quite well drawn. In using escapes or disciplinary reports as an indicator, it would be counter-productive to make either a goal in and of itself. We are hoping to use it as an indicator of general institutional climate, but it could

conceivably operate against the professional goals of counseling should simple remediation of negative activities become the explicit goal of the program.

The final piece of negative feedback to the question of whether or not escapes and disciplinary reports are good indicators of counseling effectiveness reads as follows:

The counseling program at any institution should increase the incidences of positive inmate behavior with the reduction of negative inmate behavior coming as a side effect of positive behavioral goals. The counseling program should be used as a behavioral motivation technique for individual self-improvement on the inmates part. The reduction of escapes and disciplinary reports cannot be viewed as a major goal of the counseling program. The prime objective is to motivate individual inmates toward self-improvement whether through educational, vocational, or group counseling programs.

There is no correlation between incidents of negative inmate behavior and the efficiency, variety, or professionalism of counseling services. There are too many extraneous factors to be considered when examining the cause and effect of negative inmate behavior. If the counseling program were aimed primarily at the reduction of negative behavior, approximately 85% of the inmate population would require no counseling program at all. There is no counseling program available that could or would reduce escapes or disciplinary reports. Therefore, it is much more effective to expect and counsel for positive behavior from inmates than to attempt to counsel or adjust programs for the reduction of negative behavior such as escapes or disciplinary reports.

Once again, this response is well reasoned and may be remarkable due to the depth of reasoning and the lack of defensiveness in the comments. In fairness to the persons completing the questionnaires, we thought that their comments should be reported along with the concurrence of twenty-three of the twenty-six respondents.

After reviewing the 26 questionnaire responses, several summary remarks may be in order. The most outstanding feature of these questionnaires is the near consensus on some of the basic expectations of the counseling program. If the reader of this report would re-read the evaluation design in the grant--which, incidentally, is appended as Appendix A of this report--there is a tone of labored concern there that expectations might be highly divergent, especially between agency staff who work primarily in state institutions or in central administrative offices and actual field managers of the program. One of the goals of doing the initial survey was to make people (the participants) aware of each other's expectations and also to make all of the parties to the agreement aware of the basis of performance expectations of the grant. Yet, when so many of the respondents agree with eight of the ten Earned Time duties and the large majority of other counseling and administrative and programmatic duties, there is much more closeness in the thinking of the agency and the county administrators than we had thought before.

We do intend to follow through with the suggestion made in the design that each person who responded to the survey would get a copy of the report and be able to review this information. However, we did not feel it was necessary after reviewing the results to go to selected county camps for clarification of differences, simply because there were so few differences and because of the quality of the narrative that was provided where there was disagreement with the agenda of the questionnaire. Therefore, we proceeded to move into an analysis of how these expectations had been met: how the programmatic and counseling and Earned Time expectations of the field managers and the staff who developed and administered the grant program were being met in the daily operations of the County Counseling Program.

THE IMPACT OF THE COUNTY COUNSELING PROGRAM

The purpose of this section is not to report about the achievement of grant goals of the County Counseling Program. Grant progress reports perform that function and contain much more detail about the specific annual operating goals of the program. The purpose of this section is to talk about the impact of the counseling program on the inmates in the institutions.

Measuring Program Quality

In order for the program to have an effect on inmates, it is necessary to assess the quality of what is being offered. We have developed two approaches to looking at quality; both of these approaches are exploratory, both were created in the Office of Research and Evaluation, and neither of them has been verified in terms of field perceptions of program quality. If this initial methodology of looking at the programs proves to be helpful in terms of gaining greater insights into the potential of the program itself, then we could very well develop a more elaborate and field notes-based methodology for evaluation. However, considering the early stages of this effort, we thought a more simple and indirect approach would be more appropriate in terms of the time, energy and discussions required to achieve closure on the measures.

The first grouping of the county counseling programs uses an imaginary "standards" approach. These research standards--which are of course different from actual official program standards--were developed in order to assess the degree to which the expectations noted in the first section of the report were met in the monthly operations of the program. In each of the county institutions, the counselor uses a Monthly Services

Report to notify DOR of the time and number of contacts in a variety of activities. As we reviewed these Monthly Services Reports, it was clear that the Earned Time transactions were receiving their share of time and energy. We have noted in the First Annual Earned Time System Evaluation that considerable time and effort in the counties was being devoted to completion of the required forms. What we chose for our standards were three other criteria of program effectiveness dealing more with the time spent with inmates and activities that were geared to the rehabilitation of the public offender.

The first criterion that we developed is based on the percentage of the caseload that is seen in regularly scheduled counseling sessions each month. We drew an imaginary cut-off line at ten percent of the caseload, and postulated that higher quality programs would be programs in which the counselor saw at least ten percent of his caseload on a regularly scheduled basis each month.

The second criterion that we used in this grouping of imaginary program standards has to do with the amount of time during the month that is spent in counseling activities more generally. Under this criterion we allowed under counseling activities family consultation, group counseling, guidance counseling, the regularly scheduled counseling sessions with the offenders, and informally scheduled individual counseling including drop-in visits by the inmates in the afternoons and evenings. The second criterion postulated that a quality program would be one in which there were at least 40 hours each month spent in counseling activities. Forty hours would represent roughly one-fourth of the month's work.

The third criterion that we used in the standards approach to measuring quality was geared toward minimizing administrative duties that

are not directly related to the counseling function. The way we measured the minimizing of the administrative duties was whether or not the reports showed a pattern of less than 40 hours a month devoted to administration, or in some cases we would simply look for extremely high time reports if several months of reports were missing from a set of information.

As we went through the Monthly Counselor Services Reports, we would score each county program on these three criteria. The reports that we were looking at were the reports that had been filed for FY78.

If one of the counties met all of the standards, we characterized that program as a Group 1 program. If a county met one or two of the standards but not all three, we characterized that county as being a Group 2 program, and if a county had none of the standards, it was a Group 3 program. Numerically, the Group 1 programs--that is the counties that meet all standards--constituted six of the thirty-five counties that were reviewed. Group 2 programs--those meeting one or two of the standards but not all three--constituted twenty cases, and there were nine of the county institutions that met none of these imaginary quality standards.

It would not be fair to list which counties fall into which of the groupings since the instrument has not been field tested and is just a preliminary kind of device. Nevertheless, it may be interesting to give credit to the six institutions which met these initial three criteria because they may be locales in which the program should be studied most closely. The six counties that met all of the three research standards were Carroll County, Houston County, Clarke County, Colquitt and Hall Counties, and Sumter County. Our initial work would suggest that visits to these

institutions might very well yield valuable experience or the sharing of valuable experience concerning a complete and client-oriented counseling service in a county work situation.

The second general approach looking at program quality was based on an assumption. The assumption was that specific programs should vary in their quality depending on the duration of the service at that county institution and the amount of interaction between the counselor and the inmates. In using this method we talk about long-standing programs and short-term programs, and we can talk about full-time counseling services and part-time counseling services.

The concept of the time available to develop an adequate counseling program is an important one. Time allows for a program to become coordinated with the tempo and the resources of an institution and the community in which the institution is located. If resources are limited at the time that a new counselor arrives, then time allows him or her to formulate and at least initially implement a service strategy. In addition, time allows for the acceptance of the counseling function within the environment of staff attitudes and inmate attitudes concerning the prison, its mission, and its rehabilitation potential.

In examining the records of the County Counseling Program, we found a great variety of experience with the time available for counseling. We found that long-term and short-term programs utilize both full-time and part-time counselors. We tried to simplify this into a set of patterns. Pattern A would be an institution which had consistently had a full-time counseling service over the four years of the program. The Pattern B institution would be one which had had part-time counseling at times and full-time counseling at times but had generally been active for a considerable period of time. Pattern C

institutions are those institutions which have had long-standing part-time services, and Pattern D institutions are those which have had part-time services only on a short-term basis. Finally, Pattern E institutions are those in which there is no counseling program or there are unknown services offered to offenders. Pattern E institutions also include those that have independent counseling programs that we have no quality data on.

Pattern A institutions would generally be considered to have the highest quality rating in terms of time available for inmates because they have been in existence for a considerable period of time and they have had full-time programs. Pattern D institutions would be considered to be the lowest in quality indicated by this criterion because they have only part-time services, and they have not had them long. It would be helpful, however, to recall that we have ranked these ordinally A through E, and therefore clearly perceive that Pattern A is of higher value than Pattern B, but the amount of difference between Patterns A and B and between Patterns B and C is not specified. So about all that we can say about this type of typology is that quality proceeds in descending order with the most part-time, short-term and unknown services at the bottom.

Of all of the institutions in our thirty-five cases that we studied, seven met the Pattern A, consistent full-time services. There were six intermittent part-time and full-time service institutions in the Pattern B category. There were fourteen long-standing, part-time programs. There were three short-term, part-time programs and five Pattern E programs in which there were no services, unknown services, or independent services.

One interesting observation about this categorization is that comparing the groups of Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3 by quality standards with Patterns A, B, C, D, and E yields some verification of the two methods for

each other. For example, there are no Group 1 institutions that have short-term, part-time services. In fact, two of the six Group 1 institutions have consistent full-time services and two others have gone from part-time to full-time services--but have generally Pattern B institutions because they have not always been full-time services--and one of the Group 1 institutions has a long-standing part-time service. Most of the long-standing part-time services fall into Group 2 under that imaginary standards schema. There are 12 of the 35 cases in the overall study that are Group 2 institutions meeting one or two of the program quality standards and are long-standing, part-time services, so that clearly is a major typical case in the county counseling program. Another interesting incidental observation is that of all of the 13 cases that are either Pattern A or Pattern B--being either consistent full-time services or intermittent part-time and full-time services--only 4 of those are Group 3 institutions, institutions which meet none of the standards specified in terms of counseling time and contacts with the clients. The other nine institutions fall either into Group 1 or Group 2, and five actually fall into Group 1 while only four are in Group 2. So there seems to be some clustering of the two methods of measuring quality in that programs that rate high by one set of criteria seem to also rate high by the other.

In drawing out the grids in which we looked at institutions both in terms of their pattern over time of offering services and their groupings by quality standards we were able to reduce this analysis into four basic clusters. The first cluster was simply called the "highest quality programs". The highest quality programs were those that were in the upper left hand part of our grid. They are Pattern A services over time which

meet either all of the research standards or some of the research standards, and in addition there are those two institutions which meet all of the standards but are intermittent part-time and full-time services. These seven institutions will be followed as a group, and later in the report when we discuss the impact of various institutional programs, we will simply refer to them as the highest quality cluster.

The second cluster we call the "transitional cluster of programs." It consists of five institutions, and it is defined as a general buffer group or diagonal group between the high quality cluster in the top left of the grid and the next major grouping which we will discuss in just a moment. The transitional cluster consists of one institution that had a long-standing, part-time service and meets all of the standards. consists of two institutions that have intermittent part-time and full-time services but met only one or two of the standards, and consists of two institutions that had a Pattern A long-term consistent full-time service but met no standards. Clearly these cases have little in common with each other except that they have nothing in common with the others. So we are ordinarily locating them as the second group and calling them a transitional quality service.

The "typical quality service" is this middle cell of our grid. It is the long-standing part-time service that meets one or two of the quality standards. There are twelve such institution, and we are calling this cluster "typical" because it represents the model program as it was initially instituted and as it has maintained itself to this day.

The "lowest quality cluster" is composed of the short-term, part-time services and the remainder of the Group 3 programs that meet none of the standards. There are eleven lowest quality programs. To be fair in

the analysis, we have actually isolated three programs that are so new that they may work their way out of this situation rather quickly. They are meeting some of the standards although they are short-term part-time services, and yet in order to keep the analysis simple, we grouped them into the bottom fourth cluster. This leaves us with a much simplified analysis to use in our tables. We will have a highest quality group, a transitional group, a typical group, and a lowest quality group. The reader need only refer back to this section to get clarification on how these were composed.

Measuring the Impact of Counseling

In the first section of the report, we noted that disciplinary reports and escape rates were considered by the wardens to be legitimate measures of effectiveness of the institutional program. Since in many of the county camps programs are coordinated by and sometimes represented by the counselor and his activities, these measures could be said to be measures of effectiveness of the counseling program in county institutions. There are, however, many measurement issues in reporting these kinds of factors just as there were in reporting on quality factors.

The number of major disciplinary reports is totaled each month as individual report records come in from the county correctional institutions. Each institution's monthly report is coded and forwarded for inclusion in the individual inmate's file to whom the action pertains. However, we discovered that this data processing procedure does not allow for the accumulation of figures for each institution.

Summary information for all of the county institutions is tallied in a manual system maintained by the Offender Administration Division for general reporting purposes. This did, therefore, allow for analysis of gross system trends in disciplinary reports.

We took steps to put in place an additional manual summary recording procedure which will note the number of major disciplinary reports by month by institution. This data will be available should we decide to do additional evaluations using this criterion.

The number of escapes each month for each institution is available for the fiscal year and periods previous to that. Our initial approach to measuring the escape pattern for the group of county institutions that operate counseling programs was to average the number of escapes over the 19 months of data which is used in our analysis. This procedure was carried out, and the results were analyzed for patterns that might be logically unrelated to service quality.

Larger institutions, for example, had more escapes than smaller institutions, a result that might be expected from the number of inmates assigned to these prisons. Since the needed measure would be insensitive to this type of size-related intervening influence, we divided the average monthly number of escapes by the average monthly inmate population. This measure could be interpreted as a monthly escape rate.

However, our intent was to create a measure that provided an easy and analyzable basis for comparing institutions and groups of institutions, and the escape rate scores seemed both distracting in their nature as very small fractions and potentially confusing since they common-sensically represented fractions of a person escaping. To avoid regressions into endless comparisons and to facilitate the analysis effort, we multiplied each escape rate figure by 10,000. This resulted in the escape index score, a whole number ranging from a low observation of eight in the case of one institution to a high of 191 in another. The index can be interpreted as an average monthly escape indicator adjusted for the size of the institutional population.

Since the index is adjusted for inmate population, the figure for each institution should be insensitive to the size of the service clientele. As the figure is averaged over several months, it should be rather insensitive to isolated incidents like one large escape by a group of inmates.

Having completed this procedure, we went back to the disciplinary report information and realized that the rationale for analyzing that data was almost identical to that which we were employing in the case of escape figures. Data for each institution is gathered, averaged at a monthly rate, and then adjusted for the average inmate population. This yields a disciplinary report index score for each institution and allows for the comparison of various groupings of institutions and the trending of the data over time.

Both of these measures were initially validated in the wardens' survey and generally meet the need of evaluating program impact from the operational and programmatic point of view. However, a second goal of the evaluation is to provide some initial indications at the policy and funding level of program effectiveness. In order to provide this type of feedback, we thought it was necessary to develop a measure of reinvolvement with the criminal justice system for persons who have completed the counseling program.

After an offender leaves prison, he may or may not commit additional crimes for which he is arrested or convicted or reimprisoned. The rate of reinvolvement with the criminal career displayed by groups of persons over time is often termed "recidivism." Measurement of this phenomenon requires that an indicator of failure to adjust after release be selected. This can be a measure of rearrest, reconviction, felony reconviction,

reimprisonment, or a sentence for imprisonment for a specific length of time. Any of these indicators would do as the first term of such a measure. An additional factor which relates to this recidivism measurement is the time at which the event takes place after release. For example, an ex-inmate may stay free of arrest for 18 months following release while another is rearrested within six months. The former outcome would be reported separately for the second outcome, thereby reflecting the higher social value ascribed to a longer period of being free from crime following release.

We utilized the discreet time frames of six months, one year, two years and three years following release for our analysis. Our data show groups of offenders who leave the county prisons as groups and remain exposed to the risk of rearrest for equal periods of time. The proportion of each group that recidivates within six months, within one year, within two years, and within three years provides a trendable indicator for each of the exiting groups and for any of the sub-groups which we chose to use in our analysis.

Our indicator of criminal reinvolvement was return to prison. We speculated that both data reliability and the interpretation of this event as a serious reinvolvement in crime supported the decision to use return-to-prison rates rather than either rearrest or reconviction following release.

Interpretation of the trended return rates for all offenders over time would center around the impact on the correctional system of introducing a counseling service into the county correctional institutions. All other factors being equal, the years following the introduction of the program should show improved return-to-prison rates for people leaving county

institutions if the service is effective in helping people to adjust to their family issues, getting needed vocational guidance, and other concrete and practical supports that an offender would need upon leaving the system.

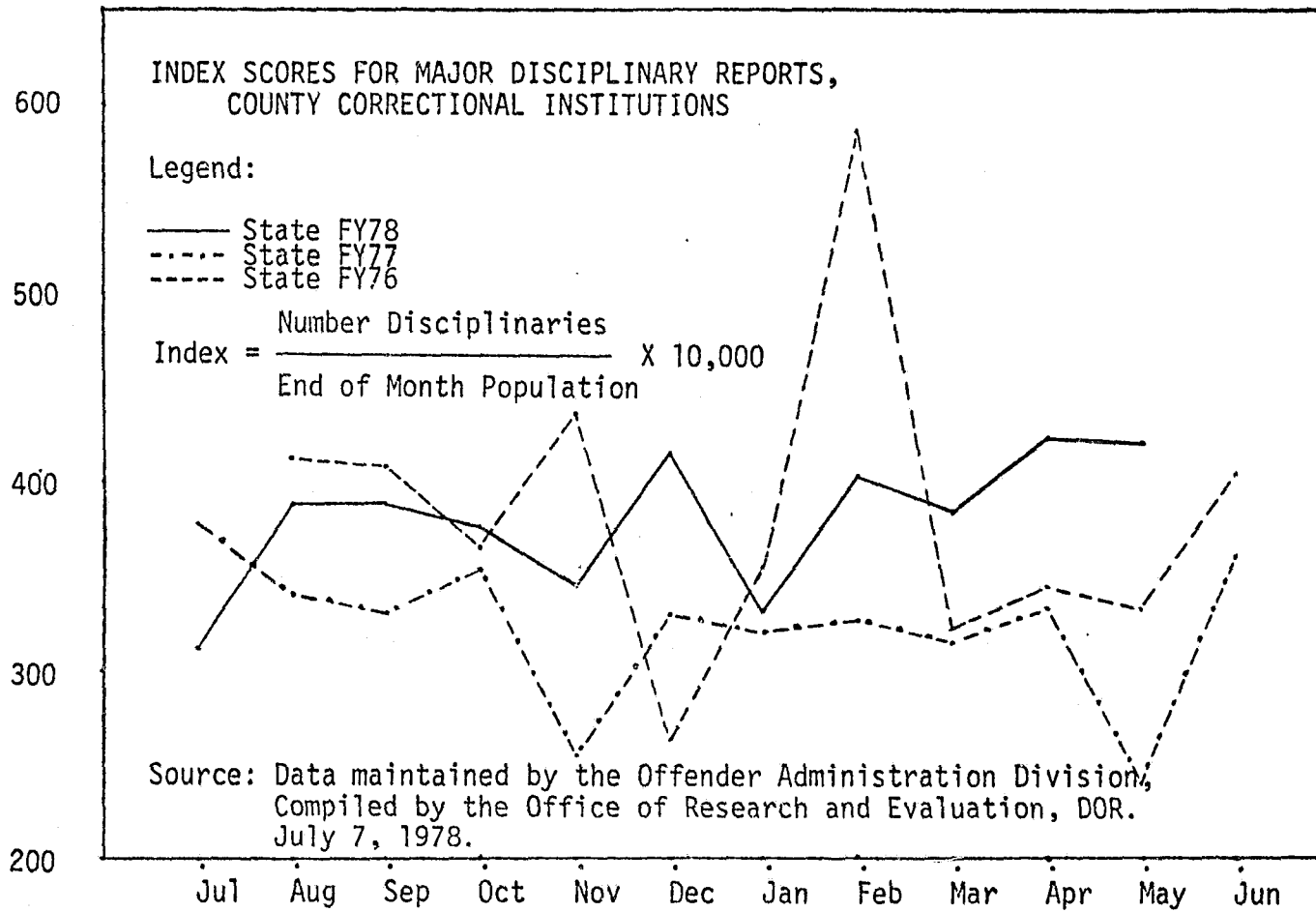
Looking at the short-term and long-term impacts on the system as a whole over time provides vague but interesting information about the possible effects of introducing this program. The information in Table 1 reports index scores for major disciplinary reports for three years of experience in the county institutions.

There are three lines on the graph showing the July through June cycle. The graph has the monthly data plotted there because of the probable effects of season on some of these behaviors, especially in terms of the heat and variety of summertime activities. In the case of the information in Table 1, the line representing FY76 is the broken line in the graph. This generally is the year during which these programs were just beginning. The line composed of dashes and dots which falls below that broken line is the data for the FY77, the year in which most of these programs were active.

Comparing just these two lines was done in a Grant Progress Report for last year's Grant. This initial set of data seemed to suggest that there was some decrease in the disciplinary report rate for county correctional institutions. However, examining the solid line--which is FY78 data--suggests that this pattern does not continue to decrease. The solid line is not as high as FY76 but is higher than FY77.

There are really two conclusions which could be drawn from this. The first conclusion is that this is an extremely crude way to measure the impact of one factor on a complex situation like county correctional

TABLE 1.



institutional life. It is not crude so much because of the nature of the measure, but rather because of that little statement that was made earlier in the report about "all other things being equal." All other things certainly are not equal. The individuals assigned to county camps might be either of a high or low risk nature depending on the overcrowding of the state system at the time. This brings us to the second observation about Table 1 which is that the data measures all county programs together. It does not distinguish between the effective and ineffective or high quality and low quality programs as characterized in this report.

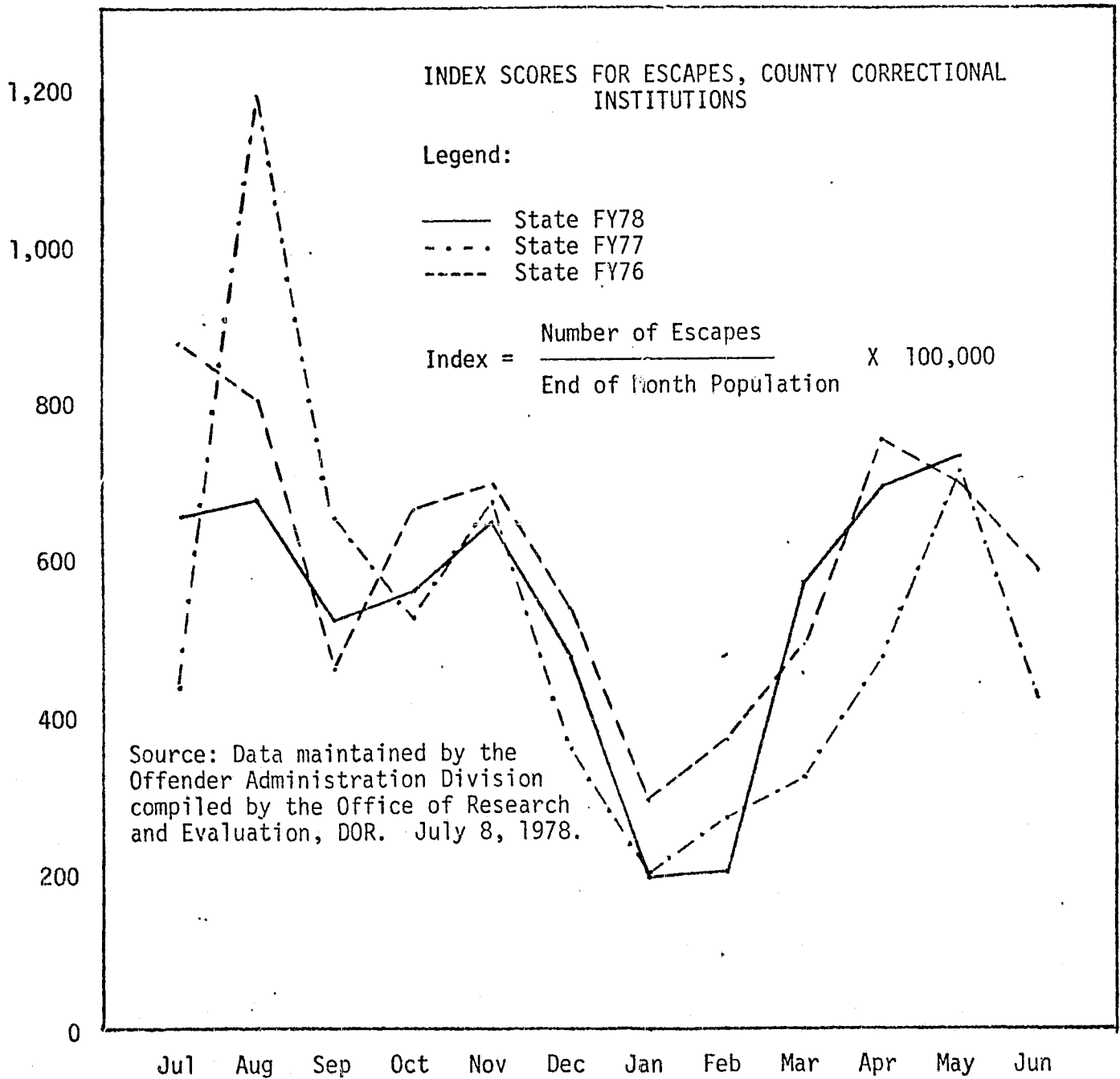
Yet it may be of interest to the audience of the report to see the seasonal and annual trends in the major disciplinary reports. A tentative conclusion would have to be that they are not predictably decreasing as a result of whatever it is that we are doing in the correctional system.

Table 2 is the trend in the index scores for escapes in the county institutions. It is a very similar table to Table 1. It has seasonal data graphed with the higher escape rates in the summer and very low escape rates in the winter clearly evident in the three annual lines.

Data for FY76--which is the broken line--and data for FY77--which is composed of dots and dashes--are nearly identical. Information for FY78 follows the general pattern of the previous two years as well. Overall there seems to be no reliable systems pattern in the escape information, except perhaps the rates during this previous summer and in each of the previous summers seem to peak at a lower level.

One possible reason for this could be the training of county correctional officers in increasing numbers, and other reasons may be selection and placement in the institutions. There simply is not a pattern there that

TABLE 2.



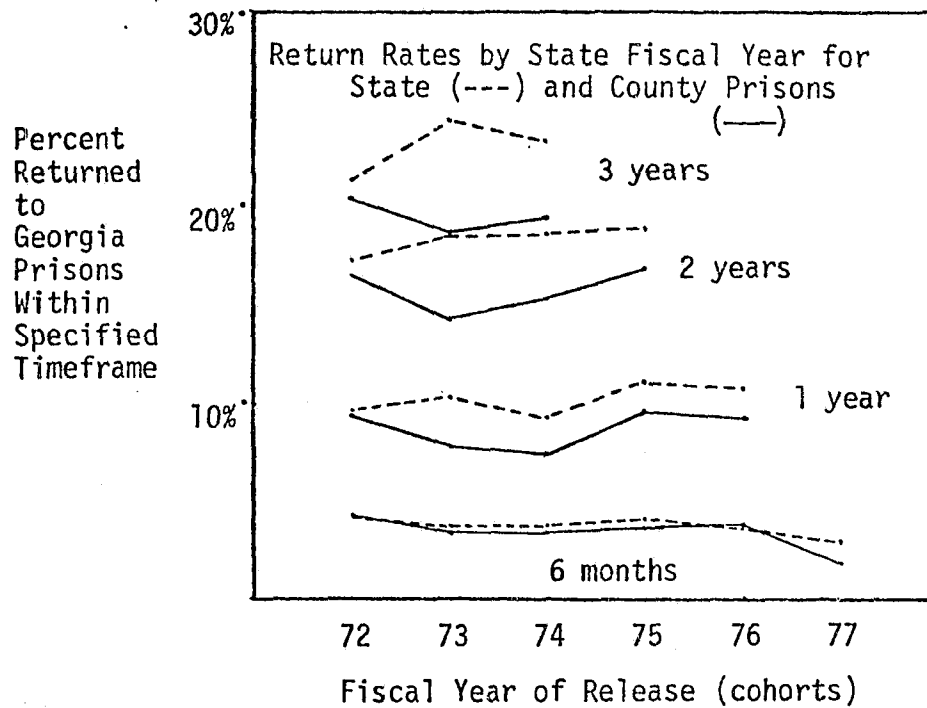
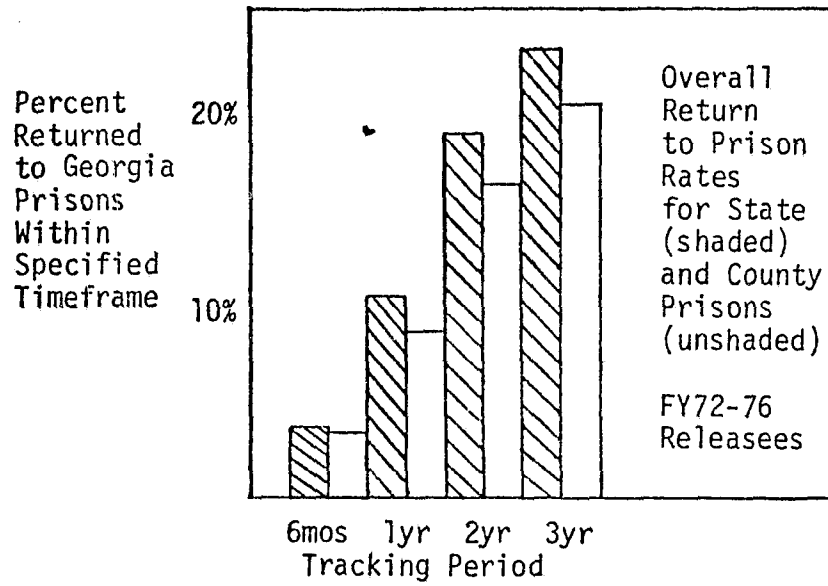
is clear enough to justify expending a great deal of energy on causal explanations. Once again, this probably tells us as much about our methodology or previous methodologies as it does about trends in the behavior of inmates. This is both an extremely multi-faceted phenomenon--the phenomenon of escaping from prison--and this is also an extremely vague way of measuring it in programs that are of varying quality.

Table 3 shows trends and a basic comparison on recidivism as measured by return-to-prison. The top table compares the return-to-prison rates of county camps and state institutions in terms of one, two, and three year tracking. An interesting observation about this first table is related to the fact that the county camps are generally assigned persons who are believed to be of lower risk and who can function safely in a work environment. This subjective judgement is apparently born out in their post-release behavior as well. They may be less likely to recommit crimes for many of the same reasons that they were less likely to escape or get in fights or cause other disruptions in the institution, and that was a major basis of their assignment to the county institutions.

The second possible explanation is the skills of individuals assigned to county camps. Many of the county work programs include the operation of machinery and other tasks that require skills, and skills are also a basic stepping stone for getting a job upon leaving. We know that jobs are related to recidivism.

Finally, it should perhaps be noted that county institutions are prisons in a traditional sense that can be missed in some of the more modern, elaborate state programs. There may be some deterrent effect of the incarceration experience when it consists of work and rather simple living conditions less disguised in terms of the punishment aspects of incarceration.

Table 3.. TWO DISPLAYS OF THE "RECIDIVISM" PHENOMENON



SOURCE: OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION, DOR.
July 10, 1978.

The second part of Table 3, however, is the information that most nearly corresponds to the previous two tables. It is the percentage of persons returned to Georgia prisons within three years, two years, one year, and six months for FY72-77. Once again, if there is a trend in the effect of the program, it might show up in the return rates here.

The six month rate over time for state and county institutions is fairly constant. The state institutions are depicted by the broken line, the county institutions by the solid line. The one year rates seem to hold the same pattern over time although the state rate is a little higher. Two year rates begin to really diverge, and the county institutions are below the state rate. They seem to be increasing at a slightly faster rate than the state institutions. The three year rates are considerably divergent with county inmates once they have left prison returning at lower proportions--20% or less within three years--and state inmates are up around 24% within three years. But in terms of there being a trend in the county line that would show a big dip in the rates as a result of the program, there is a slight decline in the difference between FY76 and FY77, but there is not a basis in that information for making a very broad generalization about the effect of county counseling on recidivism.

It is extremely important to remember that these are very vague levels of analyzing things like disciplinary reports, escape rates, and recidivism. We at this point felt the need, as explained before, to go back and develop the quality criteria and look at programs based on quality. We hope that our analysis of the adequate and long-standing counseling programs may point up some more clearly interpretable information about the impact on the rates for inmates from these

institutions. So, at this point, we will leave the analysis of general systems effects of the program and move on to the new ground of the effects of the quality of the program on the behavior of inmates at various institutions.

Program Quality and Impact

Earlier in the report we developed a typology of county counseling programs using criteria related to some imaginary standards of counseling services and some criteria related to the time available to inmates in terms of how long the programs have been operating and whether each is a part-time or full-time program. This typology yielded a very simple schema in which we grouped certain programs as the highest quality, others as transitional in quality, a typical quality group, and the lowest quality group (with a special proviso on the lowest quality group there were three cases included that were new programs that might have to be analyzed separately).

In looking at escapes in county institutions for each of these quality levels of the county counseling program, some major differences show up. Nineteen months of data were used to calculate the percentage of months in which there were no escapes. So, in Table 4 of the report, there are two columns of figures: the average escape index for each quality level of the program and the average percentage of months without escapes for each quality level as well. In the case of the average escape index score, the smaller the score the better. In the case of the average percentage of months without escape, the larger the score the better.

Table 4 suggests that program quality does have some effect on escapes. The highest quality programs averaged a score of 44 points on the escape index, whereas the lowest quality programs averaged 64 points. The transitional and typical quality programs were even higher than the lowest quality, which is possibly due to some factor other than the inmate counseling services. We will look into those possible factors later in the report. The lowest quality group is up in the 70's when the three newest county programs are taken out, suggesting that indeed they may belong in another category of the typology. When that perspective is taken, the highest quality programs have around forty escape points and everyone else has nearly seventy.

The average percentage of months in the nineteen months sample with no escapes offers a little more ambiguous information. The highest quality programs had seventy-one percent of their months with no escapes, and the lowest quality programs had seventy-five percent of their months with no escapes. However, when the three new programs were taken out of the lowest quality group, it drops the average to sixty-four for programs that were the low performers in the analysis. The transitional institutions had fifty-eight months that were escape-free months. This may be due to the fact that the larger institutions where more serious offenders are held are in the transitional group. The typical quality programs performed as well as the highest quality programs did using this indicator. Overall, the escape rate information does give us some tentative support to the possible explanation that county institutions that have counseling services--and probably some other features as well that suggest a rehabilitative and professional approach--perform better in terms of escapes than do institutions that spend less time with their clients.

TABLE 4. ESCAPES IN
COUNTY INSTITUTIONS BY
COUNSELING PROGRAM QUALITY

	<u>Average Escape Index Score</u>	<u>Average Percent Month w/o Escapes</u>
Highest Quality	43.9	.71
Transitional	70.8	.58
Typical Quality	76.2	.71
Lowest Quality	63.6	.75
(excluding new programs)	(73.2)	(.64)

Source: Office of Research and Evaluation, DOR, October 26, 1978.

The reader will recall that disciplinary reports cannot be analyzed at this level of detail this year. That being the case, escape rate information is the only interim measure available for this preliminary analysis.

Return-to-prison rates for the quality levels of the county counseling program are available in Table 5. The one-year return-to-prison rates for the county counseling program groups do not suggest that this program has had a clear impact on criminal behavior after the offender leaves prison. For example, in 1976, the persons released that year in the highest quality programs returned at the rate of six percent within a year, and the rate for the worst of the lowest quality groups was 6.3%. In terms of two year rates, the 1975 highest quality group came back at a rate of 18% within two years, and the worst of the lowest quality group reports 18% or less returning within two years.

The several years' listing of return rates is also rather interesting. The programs--or the institutional rates generally--seem to have developed patterns before the introduction of the county counseling program. For example, the highest quality programs were releasing what were probably relatively low risk offenders in 1972 and had a 7% return rate. In 1976 there were releasing higher risk individuals with a 6% return rate. We make this deduction based on the use of diversion programs and the increasing severity of the crimes for which people are being incarcerated.

The typical quality programs seem to hold their own across the years in terms of one-year rates, but the two-year rates have climbed steadily. This may be a reflection as well of the increasing severity of the offenders sent to the county camps due to the non-incarceration of less severe

TABLE 5. ONE YEAR RETURN
RATES FOR COUNTY COUNSELING
PROGRAMS.

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Highest Quality	7.2	7.5	8.0	11.2	6.0
Transitional	8.4	7.0	8.9	7.5	6.2
Typical	8.7	9.2	8.9	11.5	9.1
Lowest Quality	9.0	11.4	6.6	9.0	5.8
Subgroups:					
New (D-2)	(7.3)	(9.3)	(5.5)	(7.4)	(3.1)
Remainder	(9.3)	(11.9)	(6.9)	(9.3)	(6.3)

SOURCE: Data from the Statistics Unit, Office of Research and Evaluation tabulated by the author for this display, DOR. July 13, 1978.

TWO YEAR RETURN
RATES FOR COUNTY COUNSELING
PROGRAMS.

<u>Cluster</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>
Highest Quality	15.2	14.8	15.5	18.2
Transitional	14.8	14.7	15.2	13.7
Typical	13.6	16.9	17.5	20.7
Lowest Quality	17.0	19.4	14.7	17.2
Subgroups:				
New (D-2)	(14.7)	(17.3)	(16.4)	(13.6)
Remainder	(17.4)	(19.8)	(14.3)	(17.9)

SOURCE: Same as above.

offenders in Georgia. The fact that the typical program is characterized by long-standing part-time services would indicate that the program could not keep up with these more strenuous demands, and so the long-term impact of what they were doing began to lose pace with the increasing demands of the offenders whom they were serving.

CONCLUSION

The County Counseling Program is the subject of many expectations on the part of DOR personnel and county correctional managers. The individual counselors are expected to conduct a wide variety of activities and fulfill administrative responsibilities in addition to their case management and counseling duties. If the reader believes that descriptive information presented in the "imaginary program standards" section of the report seems to suggest that many county institutions offer modest counseling services to incarcerated offenders, this "overload" might warrant further reflection and analysis.

System indicators of institutional climate do not show decreasing "morale" problems since the inception of the counseling program. Trends in overall disciplinary and escape rates seem to be more related to other aspects of institutional life, perhaps assignment and size of the inmate population. This same observation pertains to return-to-prison rates for these institutions.

Quality considerations may, however, make a difference. There is some tentative evidence to suggest that the more professional, full-time county counseling programs have correspondingly low disciplinary and escape incidents.

APPENDIX A. EVALUATION DESIGN,
COUNTY COUNSELING GRANT

EVALUATION

The Georgia Department of Offender Rehabilitation maintains a special administrative service relationship with the county correctional institutions in the county counseling grant effort. DOR provides several administrative and technical services in support of this effort: (1) top level and middle management liaison with the county officials and correctional officials who operate the camps (Institutional Operations Division); (2) grant development, monitoring, accounting, and communication services (General Services Administration Division); and, this year, (3) program evaluation services within the Evaluation and Monitoring Services component of the Commissioner's Office. In FY78, the Director of Program Evaluation will work with the Assistant Deputy Commissioners of the Institutional Operations Division in developing an initial programmatic assessment of the impact of the county counseling program on the daily lives of the offenders assigned to these institutions.

The goal of the evaluative process will be to assist all parties to the agreement in refining their

expectations for this program. Output from the evaluative process will include an interim documentation of field and management expectations for the FY78 project. This interim product will be produced at the midpoint of the grant period and will be based on interviews conducted during the early months of program implementation. The second product of the evaluation process will be an end-of-year evaluation report. This report will synthesize numerical and interview data in an effort to assess the impact of services provided under the grant.

A basic feature of this program assessment will be its self-evaluative focus. Individuals who participate in the design and delivery of services provided by the grant will be invited to assess FY78 performance in light of their expectations. At the same time, operational notes from the field visits and data reported to the grant monitor will be synthesized into the dialogue to provide a concrete basis for the discussion of progress in implementation. Through this process, all participants can be made aware of each other's expectations and each can refine his viewpoint through participating in an evaluative review of the counseling service.

The evaluator and the IO managers who coordinate the assessment activities will cooperate in reviewing a report which summarizes progress and problems with FY78 program operations. A copy of this report will assist the agents

of the funding source and all evaluation participants in determining the degree to which they believe the program's services should be continued, expanded, or contracted/ revised.

Individuals to be contacted during the evaluative review will include:

- for selected counties:

County Camp Superintendents
County Camp Counselors
County Inmates
Other Staff at the Camps

- for DOR:

Deputy Commissioner for Institutional
Operations
Deputy Commissioner for Offender
Administration
Statewide Coordinator of Counseling Services
Statewide Coordinator of Diagnostic Services
Statewide Coordinator for the Earned Time
System
Selected Grants and Planning Staff

- Others:

Correctional Planner, State Crime Commission
Evaluation Coordinator, State Crime
Commission
Correctional Planner, Office of Planning and
Budget
President, County Wardens' Association
Executive Director, Board of Pardons and
Parole

Although it is impossible to anticipate the expectations which will be voiced concerning the County Counseling Program, one might speculate as to the general domains of relevant expectations in an effort to estimate the scope of the ultimate assessment criteria. This will assist the evaluator in the interviewing processes through which all parties to the agreement will elaborate the concrete outcomes which they anticipate.

An initial domain of expectations may relate to the area of "institutional climate". Productive and harmonious relationships among inmates and between inmates and staff may be expected to be enhanced by a program of counseling services.

A second set of expectations may prove to be those associated with case management responsibilities. Plan development, performance recording, and performance review or summary activities required under the Earned Time System have doubtless impacted the workload of staff at the county work camps.

The potential for increased use of local educational and vocational training resources may represent an area of authoritative expectations. Individuals or locales oriented to a training view of "rehabilitation" may anticipate substantial programmatic spin-offs from the

County Counseling services.

Humanitarian expectations may be uncovered as well. An improvement in personal adaptation to family crisis or other traumatic events may be among the goals of many individuals involved with the program.

Finally, there may be individuals or locales which anticipate greater involvement of the citizenry at large to result from the counselor's efforts. Volunteer services and activities conducted by or with local organizations represent a major aspect of activities in several correctional institutions in Georgia, and the expectation of increased community involvement may be a common goal for individuals related to this program.

APPENCIX B. COPY OF PRELIMINARY
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COUNTY
COUNSELING GRANT.

Department of Offender Rehabilitation



George Busbee
Governor

May 15, 1978

David C. Evans
Commissioner

The Department of Offender Rehabilitation is responsible for several administrative duties under the grant from the State Crime Commission entitled "Counseling, Basic Education, and Vocation Training for County Correctional Institutions." One of these responsibilities is the annual evaluation of the program provided through the grant funds.

The first part of the evaluation plan authorized by the Crime Commission is the survey of your expectations for the staff or services provided to your institution by the grant. Answers to the questionnaire will be used in selected on-sites visits called for in the grant. Hopefully, our checking with the wardens in advance on important factors to look at will help keep the evaluation relevant to practical corrections concerns.

Later this spring, we plan to visit a few of the county institutions to talk with staff and inmates about the counseling program and other services paid for by the grant. The field visits will help us to see and report the effects of the counseling and other services on the attitudes of the inmates, paperwork required for their files, inmate use of available education opportunities, inmates' contact with family members, and local support for your institution (e.g., volunteers). The District Director for our agency's Institutional Operations Division will accompany us on these visits to help us follow-up on your suggestions about the program.

Please cooperate in evaluating the program by filling out the attached questionnaire and returning it to the DOR Institutional Operations District Director's Office in your area. I will be getting in touch with each of these men in a week or two to collect the information.

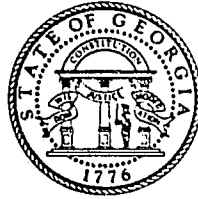
Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

George H. Cox, Director of
Research and Evaluation
Office of the Commissioner

cc E.B. Caldwell

Department of Offender Rehabilitation



George Busbee
Governor

David C. Evans
Commissioner

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

COUNTY COUNSELING GRANT
EVALUATION FOR STATE CRIME COMMISSION

May 12, 1978

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION
800 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E., ROOM 605
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30308

The grant suggests that counselors at county camps will be responsible for case management duties related to the Earned Time System. Check below any such functions expected from counselors at your institution:

- Review records of new inmates for completeness of diagnostic package
- Complete Extended Assessment if inmate is received directly from GDCC
- Formulate Performance Plan with inmate
- Submit Plan to Classification Committee for approval
- Maintain Performance Recording Sheet on each inmate
- Review and update Performance Plan on a periodic basis as required
- Process Performance Exception Reports
- Award privileges to inmates
- Prepare Quarterly Review Summary on each inmate
- Complete Parole Review Summaries and submit them to Board of Pardons and Paroles
- Other (Please Specify): _____

Comments: _____

In addition to maintaining complete case records, the grant indicates that counselors will provide various consultation services to inmates. Check below any such services expected from counselors at your institution:

- Drug/Alcohol Counseling
(provided for all inmates
assessed to have drug/alcohol problems)
- Family Conferences/Assistance
(conversations, correspondence, phone calls,
etc. from inmates' families)
- Vocation/Education Guidance
- Short-term individual counseling
(scheduled conference to discuss informal
grievances, review performance, etc.)
- Long-term individual counseling
(formal sessions to provide treatment
for identified adjustment or growth
needs)
- Group counseling
- Other (please specify): _____

Comments: _____

The grant suggests that a counselor's duties include a number of administrative functions that are related to his case management responsibilities. Check below any such involvement expected from counselors at your institution:

- Serve as member of the Classification Committee
- Serve as member of the Disciplinary Committee
- Maintain any necessary correspondence with court on individual inmate cases
- Attend court hearings on specified inmate cases
- Attend Parole Board hearings on specified inmates cases
- Other (please specify): _____

Comments: _____

The grant narrative describes counselor involvement in a number of self-improvement programs. Check below any activities that counselors at your institution are expected either to lead or to coordinate; that is, differentiate between activities where the counselor is totally in charge and those for which he/she provides scheduling or other backup assistance:

Lead	Coordinate	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult Basic Education
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	GED Preparation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vocational Training (OJT)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bible Study
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious Services
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation Program
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Library
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guides to Better Living

Comments: _____

One of the goals outlined in the grant is to reduce the instances of negative inmate behavior, as evidenced by fewer escapes and disciplinary reports. Do you feel that reducing escapes and disciplinary reports agrees with your own expectations concerning the counseling program at your institution?

Yes

No

If no, please explain further: _____

APPENDIX C. COPY OF MONTHLY
COUNSELOR SERVICES REPORT.

**INSTITUTIONAL MONTHLY COUNSELOR SERVICES REPORT
(FOR COUNTY COUNSELING REPORTS)**

INSTITUTION: _____

Average Caseload Size Per Counselor this Month: _____ Inmate Population: _____

Number of Counselors with Caseloads this Month: _____

COUNSELING SERVICES	NUMBER OF INMATES	TOTAL COUNSELOR HOURS OF INVOLVEMENT
Individual Counseling - short-term scheduled conferences		
Individual Counseling - long-term scheduled treatment		
Other Individual Counseling - drop-ins, unscheduled contacts		
Vocation/Education Guidance -		
Drug/Alcohol Counseling -		
Family Conferences/Assistance -		
Group Counseling -		
COUNSELING CASE ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION		
Performance Plan/Contract - Developed, Revised		
Performance Recording -		
Quarterly Review Summaries -		
Court (hearings, reports, etc.) -		
Disciplinary Report (major) -		
Inmate Grievances (formally filed) -		
Parole Board (hearings, reports, etc.) -		
Classification Committee -		
Disciplinary Committee -		
Program Referral -		
Supervision of Counseling Staff -		
Award of Inmate Privileges (i.e., phone calls, etc.)		
OTHER ADMINISTRATION		
General Administration (duties other than caseload)		
Training		
Annual/Sick Leave		

COUNSELOR PROGRAM COORDINATION (other than individual/group counseling)	NUMBER OF INMATES	TOTAL COUNSELOR HOURS OF INVOLVEMENT
Alcoholics Anonymous		
Guides for Better Living		
Jaycees/Jaycettes		
Other Self-Help Clubs, Organizations		
Recreation		
Worship Services		
Bible Study		
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COUNTY COUNSELING GRANT		
Basic Education		
Literacy/Remedial		
Enrolled inmates showing one grade level improvement over 100 hours of instruction		
Enrolled in GED preparation programs		
Approximate reading level of those enrolled		
Passing GED examination and awarded certificate by State Department of Education or County Board of Education		
Number of vocational programs offered		
Enrolled in vocational training courses at institution		
Enrolled in vocational training courses at area vo/tech schools		
Number completing above courses		
Number certified by State		

Counselor Cost Center Monitor

END