

A SECOND CHANCE IN OKLAHOMA?  
A REVIEW OF NATION RE-ENTRY TRENDS AND  
OKLAHOMA'S EFFORT TO PREPARE INMATES FOR  
LIFE AFTER INCARCERATION

By

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To be honest, I never thought I would get to write this section. The last time I actively worked on it was five years ago and at that time I cared deeply about school and the educational process. I truly believed that my college degree would define who I would be. Some time has passed since then, too much time, if you ask my original committee (however, that isn't hardly possible since all but one of them have retired). But in the five years away from the academic classroom, I enrolled in the classrooms of life.

During that time I truly learned about the process of socialization within the prison setting. I've spent the last six years knee deep in the daily on-goings and problems associated with life in the correctional setting. In my previous jobs as a correctional officer, correctional case manager, correctional housing unit manager, and quality assurance manager, I've been able to listen to stories about what brought men to prison and what has kept them there. It was through first-hand observations that the fire of yearning to understand prisonization and the preparations for release was kept alive. Although many people thought I was insane leaving the cushioned environment of college life to work full-time in a prison, I knew it was a calling. I didn't want to ever say, "Research indicates..." instead I wanted to say what life indicated. And I feel like I've been able to do that now.

I would like to thank Drs. Gary Webb, Tom Shriver, and Tamara Mix for their gamble on a graduate student past her prime. I know that each of you took a chance committing to work with me. Drs. Webb and Shriver knew what they were getting into, however, Dr. Mix went blindly. I thank each of you for the role that you have played in my continued education. I would have never even been at Oklahoma State University if it were not for Dr. Shriver. Additionally, I probably would not have stayed at Oklahoma State University if it were not for Dr. Webb and his constant reminder of, “I told you if you started to work at that prison you wouldn’t finish.” I can’t thank both of you enough for your initial and continual interest in my success. I cannot thank professors and not thank Dr. Richard Dodder, my original advisor. It was Dr. Dodder who encouraged me to follow my dreams, wherever they took me – even if it meant to prison. His personal story of self-discovery will always remain in my heart and will continue to guide my career decisions.

I would like to dedicate this work and experience to the three most important men in my life: my husband, David Adney, my father, Robert VanWinkle, and my grandfather, the recently deceased Martin Reece. These three men have taught me the greatest lessons are not taught in the classroom – they are taught in life. Each of these men has followed their passions and each of them has had a life of happiness as determined by them. I only hope to follow in their footsteps.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

From 1999 to 2000 the number of inmates released from incarceration increased from 400,000 to more than 600,000. Many of these 600,000 inmates once released will return to a life of crime (Beck 2002). With the steady increase of national inmate population growth, this number is likely to continue to increase. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that nearly 65% of new releases will be rearrested within three years of their release date (Beck 2002). Given these alarming statistics, there has been an increased effort within correctional programmatic frameworks to better prepare inmates for their release back into society. Many of the innovative program plans are designed to offer the offender assistance while they are incarcerated and to assist with the transition from incarceration to the community.

This study examines how recent changes in national re-entry policies and correctional programs have influenced the re-entry process within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. It will focus on two primary objectives. First, it will review national policy trends including the Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative and the National Second Chance Act. Second, through interviews with prison officials within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, it will assess the programs available to inmates prior to release in Oklahoma. In pursuing the second objective, this study will examine if there is a gap between the goals and objectives outlined by the Department of Corrections and the actual process at the state's medium security prisons.



## Background of the Problem: Leaving the Walls Behind

It is estimated that more than 95 percent of the United State's prison population will eventually walk from behind the prison walls and into the streets of the larger society. It is further calculated that nearly 40 percent of those individuals currently incarcerated in many state prison facilities will be released from custody within the next year (Beck 2000). The prison population that is preparing to hit the streets is generally classified as a high-risk population group. The largest groups of inmates preparing for release are white male inmates (approximately 85 percent) with a median age of 34. Many returning inmates are released back into society with chronic health problems including substance abuse and mental illness as well as infectious diseases commonly found in correctional settings including hepatitis C, tuberculosis and HIV or AIDS.

Although there is evidence that prison programs can be cost effective and beneficial to inmates, recent surveys indicate that relatively few inmates take advantage of these programs while incarcerated. Many researchers are increasingly, yet cautiously, turning optimistic about the effectiveness of certain types of in-prison programs available to inmates. Most penal settings offer various types of in-prison programs including drug and alcohol treatment, educational opportunities ranging from basic adult education to GED, vocational training and even college classes. In addition, an increasing number of correctional facilities are also offering faith based communities in efforts to provide support for life outside of prison. However, most inmates do not participate in programs offered to prepare them for release and life in the larger society.

## Prison Life

Life in a correctional setting is one based upon life in what Goffman (1961) described as a total institution. A total institution is an isolated, enclosed system such as a prison, mental hospital, or training camp whose primary purpose is to control most aspects of the life of some, if not all, of its participants. How total institutions maintain their hold on individuals' lives, the consequences they produce for individuals and social systems, and how people adapt to the limitations imposed by their circumstances is of great interest to researchers. The prison environment is no exception.

In a prison setting, one form of a total institution, the basic needs of the inmates are provided by the state or the contracted agency running the facility. In this setting inmates are totally separated from society and are treated in a regimented and often dehumanizing manner (Goffman 1961). This objectification process can be comprehended by examining the initial classification process where inmates are given a number and are no longer treated as a person with a name. To the inmates, life in prison means a life locked up behind prison walls and placed under constant surveillance by staff and prison administrators. Now, everything the inmate once did in private is done under the eyes of the prison staff and other inmates. Inmates are required to carry out their prison sentence following the institution's rules and regulations. Part of this new lifestyle requires the inmate to dress and act like everyone else and to have little, if any, personal possessions. In addition, inmates are told where they will be living – and often have no say in the matter.

Once inmates have entered the penal institution they must learn how to adjust to prison life. There are several stages that inmates will go through before settling into the prison environment (Sheridan 1992). The first stage of adjustment occurs immediately

following the sentencing process. In most states, inmates initially take part in the process of diagnosis and classification where the state will determine the security risk of an inmate and the necessary treatment needed. This process will determine which facility an inmate serves their prison sentence.

Once an inmate enters the institution, they will often begin to deal with the realization of incarceration. This period often results in depression and enforced idleness that often leads to boredom (Sheridan 1992). After a brief period of time inmates will become familiar with the on-goings of the institution including the prison underground market and any racial conflict that exists in the institution. The final stage of transition into the prison community occurs after the early adjustment period, and it is here that the inmate learns how to make prison life more bearable. During this stage of adjustment inmates begin to get social support from other inmates where they are learning how to “do time.” In addition, inmates may begin participation in training courses and other group activities. Here inmates are able to take education and self-help courses, learn technical skills, and often find themselves becoming involved in religious activities. All of these coping skill are integrated into the inmate’s life to help occupy time and to make prison life more livable.

#### Reasons for the Study

The large number of inmates being released into the community opens up a new set of issues on how to deal with this increasing rate of offenders returning to society. Currently, it is estimated that one in five state prisoners leave the institution with no form of post release supervision such as parole. If inmates have accepted the prison culture while incarcerated it is likely they will find it difficult to be crime free once released from prison. Recidivism is

defined as the tendency to relapse into a previous behavior or condition. For the purposes of this paper, recidivism is considered the rate or percentage of offenders who are rearrested, reconvicted, re-sentenced or returned to prison with or without a new crime within three years.

A Bureau of Justice study tracked the recidivism rate of 272,111 inmates released from 15 states in 1994 and found that inmates' are the most vulnerable for recommitting criminal offenses during the first six months following their release. In the 1994 Bureau of Justice study, researchers found that within the first 6 months of release from incarceration, 29.9% of inmates monitored had been rearrested for either a felony or misdemeanor. In addition, this research found within the first year, approximately 44.1% of prisoners were rearrested and within 3 years, 67.5% of inmates were rearrested. Of these 272,111 inmates released, 46.9% were convicted of a new crime and 25.4% of these inmates had new prison sentences (Langan and Levin, 2002).

Similar figures are found in Oklahoma where 26.2% of inmates released in 2000 had relapsed into criminal behavior and committed new crimes within three years of their release date. In an August 2004 column in Inside Corrections, the Oklahoma DOC newsletter, agency Director Ron Ward stated that Oklahoma DOC could no longer have the idea that once inmates are released from their custody they are no longer responsible for that inmate. He indicated that DOC along with other state agencies needed to work together to make sure that the released inmate has a chance at success. He went on to explain why the DOC now stressed the process of re-entry:

There are many reasons, one of them being recidivism. For FY 2003, there were 8,247 receptions and out of those 3,187 (or 38.64%) had prior Oklahoma incarceration. From July 1, 2003 through May 31<sup>st</sup> of this year, there have been 7,970 receptions with 3,264 (or 40.95%) having a prior Oklahoma incarceration. With the

cost of incarceration rising, we cannot afford the numbers of offenders that are currently returning to the system (2004:2).

As Travis (2000) indicated, “the overarching goal of re-entry, in my view, is to have returned in our midst an individual who has discharged his legal obligation to society by serving his sentence *and* has demonstrated an ability to live by society’s rules”. For this goal to be achieved there must be an overall paradigm shift in correctional priorities. The first of these is recognizing what leads individuals to relapse back to criminal thinking and behavior. Travis indicates that this must occur at the beginning of the inmates’ sentence and continue through incarceration and through a period of conditional supervised release. Current correctional practices rarely permit this type of inclusive involvement. Correctional facilities can help prepare an inmate for release, but their authority does not go further than their facility. In the same notion, parole officers are not able to work with potential offenders until they are released from incarceration.

### Preview of Remaining Chapters

Chapter two provides a review of literature on the process of socialization and resocialization that offenders experience throughout their incarceration. This background information is essential for understanding the goals and objectives of effective correctional programming. Additionally, this chapter outlines the stresses that come with incarceration for both the offender and the family members left behind. This chapter gives an introduction of two national re-entry programming trends and explains the theory behind their intended focus.

Chapter three reviews the Oklahoma Department of Corrections re-entry practices. This chapter depicts the ideological change that has occurred within the department. This chapter outlines program opportunities offered by the Department as well as establishes the criteria for participation in programs and sets the stage for the research to be outlined in chapter four.

Chapter four defines the methodology used to gather information. This chapter begins by stating the goals of the research and the researcher's plan for accomplishing those goals and describes the process used to gain access to the research subjects. This chapter addresses various aspects of the interview guide as well as explains the ethical issues involved in qualitative research.

Chapters five and six consist of data analysis obtained throughout the semi-structured interviews personnel associated with programs in medium security prisons operated by or contracted through the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. Specifically, chapter six examines interview responses to assess if correctional personnel at the facility level think there is a gap between the Department of Corrections ideology of programming and what is occurring at the facility levels.

Finally, chapter seven of the research provides a summary of the research project. Additionally, it draws conclusions from the research found and identifies any limitations of the study. This chapter offers contributions and suggestions for future work in the area of inmate programming and preparation techniques for inmates approaching their release from incarceration.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### The Process of Socialization

Socialization is the process in which an individual learns and becomes incorporated into the patterns of interaction of a given society (Mead 1932). From a micro-sociological perspective, socialization is what internalizes society's cultural rules (norms) that govern social behavior and social responses and shared ideas ranking of something based on its relative social worth or goodness (values). Socialization is a learning process that relies in part on explicit teaching and in part on latent learning; that is, on the inadvertent absorption of taken-for-granted ways of relating to others. While everyone is exposed to socializing forces, individuals vary considerably in their deliberate or unwitting openness to them.

Clausen (1986) indicates that socialization, at any age, is a process that must be looked at in terms of both the individual and the group. Socialization in the vantage of the group is considered a mechanism in which members are able to learn and internalize the values, norms, and beliefs that expand on the stated goals of the group. In contrast, socialization in the perspective of the individual involves the process of learning and participating in social life (see Sewell 1963:163).

When understanding the process of adult socialization it is helpful to examine the concept through two central themes – the degree of consistency in social behavior and the occurrence of socialization throughout the life-course. The first of these themes considers the consistency of social behavior in terms of socialization. Here it is important to remember the core personality may develop during the early years of socialization, but the formation will

last well into the adult years. This is often a response to specific changes that occur later in life as responses to a change in group affiliations, individual roles and expectations by society (Clausen 1986). The second proposition of adult socialization involves the content of what has been. As indicated by Mortimer and Simmons (1978), the content of socialization varies throughout the life-course:

In terms of *content* (Brim 1966), socialization in childhood is thought to be concerned with the regulation of biological drives; in adolescence, with the development of overachieving values and self-image (Simmons et al 1973); while in adulthood, behaviors (such as those related to the work role), as well as more superficial personality features (White 1952; Goode et al 1956; Brim 1966)... Adult socialization is more realistic, involving the synthesis of what has been learned previously and the development of modes of reconciling contradictory normative standards (Clausen 1968; Cottrell 1969; Riley et al 1969) (1978:422).

The continuing change throughout the life-course constitutes a need for understanding adult socialization. As individuals age, their roles and expectations change. The socialization that individuals receive in childhood will not be adequate for the roles that they will play later in life. Therefore, predictable life-course changes are problematic in that adjustment to role changing is often a stressful period.

Release from incarceration is one form of re-socialization that can be stressful. While there is an abundance of research examining *prisonization*, the socialization effects of incarceration, there is little information regarding the consequences of this process and what happens to inmates as they prepare for release from incarceration. As Zingraff (1975) notes,

Prisonization research grew out of the desire to predict the outcome of assimilation into the inmate subculture, as membership in the subculture was thought to impede the resocialization goals of the formal organization. Researchers have simply abandoned this pursuit, and what was originally a means to an end became an end in and of itself (1975:337).



As Clemmer (1958) and others have indicated (see Irwin 1970; Mendels 1970; Studt 1973) much of the anxiety and depression that accompanies release from incarceration centers on social expectations of the larger society. Studt (1967, 1973) examines the link between symptoms of pre-release anxiety and post-release depression. His analysis notes:

Almost every aspect of the individual's life requires some change – language, patterns of eating sleeping, recreating, and managing time; and the accepted conventions of social relations. Important social skills from the past must be retrieved in learning once again how to manage money and transportation, how to schedule one's use of time, and how to take on the pace of normal work. For many parolees, the reentry phase of reintegration is experienced as a period of confusion, filled with anxiety, missed cues, embarrassment, over-intense impulses, and excitement followed by depression (1973:43).

#### Stresses of Release from Incarceration and Resocialization

After spending the most recent years of their life in the total confinement behind prison walls, many inmates experience anxiety, irritability, and many other symptoms associated with gate fever as their release date approaches. Gate fever is the prerelease stress that soon-to-be-released inmates anticipate upon the transition from incarceration to freedom (Cormier, Kennedy & Sendbuehler 1967:317). This phenomenon is not new to criminologists; when an inmate's release date comes closer, stress levels are typically at an all-time high (Dy 1974:1152). After the first few days of freedom, inmates report increased amounts of stress, anxiety and depression (Irwin 1970:140). Renzema (1988) tested the hypothesis of gate fever and measured inmate's stress levels when preparing for deinstitutionalization and found that stress levels increased immediately prior to release, decreased dramatically after release, and then increased to and often surpassed the level of stress prior to release within a year of freedom (152, 159).

Gluzman (1981) proposed that inmates sentenced for an extended period of time experience emotions similar to the phenomenon of gate fever where “toward the end of their terms, many of them (prisoners) experience massive and persistent negative emotions associated with their prospective liberation from camp” (1981:57). Camp, or prison culture, he says, is contradictory to the norms and culture of the larger society. When an individual is isolated for such an extended period of time, the agents of socialization for the larger society lose their relevance.

Not only does society evolve during the period of incarceration, relationships may change and many, if not all, deteriorate after such an elongated time. In many situations the accumulation of these changes result in the prisoner’s increased fear of freedom, or gate fever. Gluzman believes that this increased anxiety toward release is not a reaction to a successful situation (deinstitutionalization), but instead is a drawn out process that develops over time (like a long prison sentence). In a sense, this fear is not dread of the unknown, but anxiety of events that may occur in the future. As he further hypothesizes, the fear of release from the controlled environment of a prison is not a “breakdown” or any other type of mental illness or disorder. Instead, Gluzman described the experience as a social phenomenon that should be studied to gain further understanding of the emotions that go along with release from incarceration (61).

For these reasons, it has become essential to re-examine the current prison culture and try to develop a way to prepare inmates to break free of their prison socialization and accept the norms and values of the larger society. This process is not one that begins shortly before their release into society, but should be one that is identifiable as a goal throughout their incarceration. There has been an increase of national and state sponsored opportunities that

are established to help relieve the intensity of pre-release anxiety and post-release depression that inmates may experience. There are efforts being made to properly equip inmates with the skills and resources needed to be successful law abiding citizens once they are released from incarceration.

### From Prisonization to Successful Re-entry

Correctional policy makers have made countless attempts to create a system where an offender would be able to serve his sentence and then be released back into the community without the risk of re-offending. Research has identified several stumbling blocks that inmates face upon their return to the community including, but not limited to re-establishing family and social support networks, securing affordable housing, obtaining employment, receiving medical treatment and finding transportation. There has again been the call to find a way to put community services in place so these hindrances will be less of an obstacle for inmates who have completed their prison sentence and are looking for a new life. There have been numerous state and federal programs designed to help ease the transition from incarceration to successful re-entry. This research will focus on two of those efforts, the Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative and the National Second Chance Act.

### Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative

In 2003 the Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI) was developed by the U. S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs and other federal partners to assist with the crisis of younger high-risk offenders returning to the community. SVORI was designed to target juvenile (ages 14-17) and adult inmates (ages 18-35) that have a history of

serious or violent crimes that include criminal homicide, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault. Gendreau and Andrews's (1990) research indicated that these high-risk offenders require intensive interventions to reduce their criminal behavior once released from incarceration. They suggested that since this group of offenders is among those now 600,000 inmates returning to society every year, that correctional officials, law enforcement agencies and community service groups should work together to ensure that this group has effective re-entry strategies.

U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the nationwide effort to assist these inmates back into the community through a collaborative effort of federal agencies including the U.S. Departments of Labor, Justice, Veteran Affairs, Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and the Social Security Administration. This initiative represents a paradigm shift in the way state, local, and federal agencies are accustomed to doing business. Where these forms of government were previously in competition for funding, these groups are now working together to establish national models of "best practices" and "what works" in corrections and re-entry.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Programs, SVORI's goals are to develop re-entry programs that would begin in the correctional institution and continue when the inmate discharges and moves back into society. SVORI has three phases that can be implemented. The first of these phases, Protect and Prepare, takes place within the institutional setting. In this phase an inmate takes part in programs that are designed specifically to prepare inmates for their return to society. Some of the suggested programs include a needs and risk assessment, educational opportunities, mental health and substance abuse treatment, job skill training, and mentoring, if available. The second phase of SVORI

is Control and Restore. This phase is comprised of community based transition programs where the agencies work directly with the inmate once they are released from incarceration. Services available in this phase address educational needs, daily living skills, job skill development, continued needs and risk assessment, and additional mental health and substance abuse treatment and court ordered monitoring if required. The final phase of SVORI is Sustain and Support. This portion of the initiative includes community based long-term support programs that serve to connect these individuals with a network of social services and community based organizations that provide continued services as determined by phases one and two. According to Ashcroft, "This initiative helps provide individuals who have been released to the community to become productive citizens and members of society. The re-entry programs aid in making sure these individuals will not return to a life of crime" (2003).

### The Second Chance Act

The second of these national efforts to reduce recidivism among inmates is the Second Chance Act. This act is the effort of a bipartisan group that would provide states and local governments the funds to increased transitional services to help with the successful release of inmates back into society. The bill was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Reps. Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Danny Davis (D-Illinois), Mark Souder (R-Indiana), and Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D-Ohio) and was successfully passed. In President Bush's 2004 State of the Union Address, he called for agencies to

Consider another group of Americans in need of help. This year, some 600,000 inmates will be released from prison back into society. We know from long experience that if they can't find work, or a home, or help, they are more likely to commit crime and return to prison. So tonight, I propose a four-year \$300 million

prisoner re-entry initiative to expand job training and placement services, to provide transitional housing to help newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith based groups...America is the land of second chance, and when the gates of prison open, the path should lead to a better life.

This new legislation allocates over \$112 million over a two-year period to provide \$40 million per year for the Reauthorized Reentry Demonstration Program, \$15 million per year for community based mentoring programs and \$1 million per year for state grants for research. As Representative Danny Davis (D-Illinois) stated in support of this legislation,

The Second Chance Act is a good first step that will provide a directional approach to better understanding what works to increase public safety, reduce crime, and lower the recidivism rate. No matter what, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and jobs are the cures to incarceration. These men, women, and children still have to live in our communities and need all of the help we can give them because when we help them, we help ourselves (2005).

The bill itself focuses on four areas that are of great concern for inmates and society as they are being released from prison: jobs, housing, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and strengthening family ties. This bill provides opportunities for states and local governments to work with proven “best practices” from corrections, parole, substance abuse treatment and extended case management to enhance public safety and return offenders to productive members of society. To fully understand the impact that each of these designated areas of focus an examination of the statistics used by legislatures and other research findings is essential.

### Employment Challenges

Wolf and Harlow (2003) found that employment is a key factor in the successful re-entry of offenders into the community after incarceration. However, obtaining employment is one of the most difficult aspects of re-entering society for a former inmate. Through their study with The National Institute of Justice they found that after one year of release from

incarceration approximately 60 percent of former inmates are unemployed. Many offenders do not have job-seeking experiences, a legitimate work history, or any marketable occupational skill. In addition to these barriers, they have their criminal record as another barrier to their entry into the workforce.

One way that most correctional institutions have attempted to assist inmates in their return to the workforce is through educational opportunities. More than 90 percent of state prisons offer some form of educational programming for inmates. In a 2003 Bureau of Justice Statistics report researchers found that 68 percent of state prison inmates did not have a high school diploma while 26 percent of state prison inmates had completed their GED while incarcerated. In addition, approximately 11 percent of inmates in state prison systems had participated in college level courses while incarcerated (Wolf Harlow 2003).

Research has indicated that when inmates participate in educational opportunities while incarcerated they are less likely to commit new crimes once released (Flannigan 1994 and Fabelo 2000). In a 1995 study evaluating the recidivism rate of inmates that completed educational programs, Harer (1995) showed a 39 percent recidivism rate for participants of educational programs and 46 percent recidivism for non-participants. Implications of these studies are that if an inmate no longer lacks the basic educational skills of reading, writing, and comprehension then he will have a better chance at avoiding a criminal lifestyle when released from prison.

Educational opportunities are only one way to help prepare released inmates for employment once released from incarceration. Many correctional facilities offer prison industry programs where inmate labor is used to manufacture items for the public sector. Many states use prison industry programs to enhance their institutions and to provide positive

work experiences to their populations. In a 1998 Congressional Committee on Education and the Workforce several officials met to discuss the impact of prison industry programs on an inmate's return to society. Chairman Pete Hoekstra (Michigan) indicated that

Prison work serves several useful purposes. It helps to combat idleness and thus maintain order. It imparts fundamental work habits, often where such skills are totally lacking. When coupled with vocational training, prison work programs can give an inmate the job skills that will help the person find employment that pays a living wage. Done right, the experience can foster self-esteem.

Prison industry programs are designed to provide inmates with "real world" work environments, with comparable pay, and provide them with a marketable skill to gain legitimate employment once released. Prison industry programs have numerous benefits to both prison officials and the public sector. To the correctional facility, the use of prison industry program participation can be used as a "reward" to the best behaved inmates. In many states there are strict criteria used to determine which inmates meet the criteria to work in such a premiere job within the institution. Prison industry programs are also a cost-effective way to occupy a portion of the prison population. For the inmate, participation in prison industry programs offers a chance to work for standard wages, develop or increase job skills, and provide a sense of purpose while incarcerated. Prison industry programs are beneficial to the private sector because they allow access to an untapped workforce. In addition, the public benefits from prison industry programs because inmates contribute to victim compensation funds and pay taxes on wages earned in prison industry programs.

### Housing Challenges

Quite often when an inmate is released from incarceration, there is no place to call home. For the returning prisoner who has no immediate access to living accommodations, a homeless shelter may be the first step upon returning to the community. For the inmate who



is either preparing for or who is recently released from prison, there are many circumstances that securing housing difficult. For example, without having a work history or documented income, many newly released inmates find it difficult to rent an apartment or finance other housing. Inmates who have to utilize homeless shelters as their only source of housing may find it difficult to secure employment as employers would not have a way to contact the individual. Additionally, an ex-offender living in a shelter may not have access to appropriate clothes to wear to an interview or to work.

State agencies have struggled with identifying where the responsibility of locating appropriate housing for newly released inmates rests. Correctional agencies are not normally responsible for inmates once they are released from incarceration. Parole agencies and other agencies that supervise offenders once released from their sentences are limited with staff and budget constraints that might prevent them from getting more involved with locating appropriate housing. Social service agencies are often the organization that is left to assist the ex-offender. Many times however, the ex-offender will have to compete with other priorities like public assistance or child welfare. These obstacles may make it difficult to the ex-offender to establish a stable housing situation once released from incarceration.

Familial housing is frequently the first housing option available to a prisoner returning to the community. However, in many situations, this alternative is not always an option. In some instances, the prisoner is unwilling to return to a prior living arrangement or neighborhood. It is not uncommon that the prior living condition led to criminal behavior. Many times the family is the victim of the crime that resulted in incarceration. Other situations may have the newly released inmate as a financial burden to an already strained

household. This scenario is especially prevalent in families that are living in government subsidized housing.

Current U.S. policy does not provide access to public housing to those who have been convicted of a felony. Federal law mandates that the Public Housing Authority prohibits providing public housing assistance to three categories of ex-offenders – those thought to be currently taking drugs, inmates that by statute register as sex offenders, and those convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine on public housing premises. Those inmates that fall into the last two categories are restricted from public housing for life.

As President Bill Clinton explained in his 1996 State of the Union address, “The rule in public housing should be one strike and you’re out.” Following this lead, Congress later adapted the “one strike” policy to public housing regulations. The Department of Housing and Urban Development further enforced the policy set forth by Congress and suggested,

Because of the extraordinary demand for affordable rental housing, public and assisted housing should be awarded to responsible individuals...At a time when the shrinking supply of affordable housing is not keeping pace with the number of Americans who need it, it is reasonable to allocate scarce resources to those who play by the rules. There are many eligible, law-abiding families who are waiting to live in public and assisted housing and who would readily replace evicted tenants. By refusing to evict or screen out problem tenants, we are unjustly denying responsible and deserving low-income families access to housing and are jeopardizing the community and safety of existing residents who abide by the terms of their lease (1996).

In response to current policy and practices by federally sponsored programs, President Bush and members of Congress are now sanctioning the concept of providing transitional housing for some prisoners to help with the problem of homelessness among newly released inmates. This is considered a critical step toward giving newly released inmates a place to call home and to keep them from re-entering the prison system.

Finding appropriate shelter for the transition from incarceration to release is imperative for the offender. This need reaches far beyond the need for a place to call home, and stretches into other elements of successful re-entry. Current research indicates a link between homelessness and incarceration. The Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates that 12 percent of state prisoners were homeless at the time of their arrest. It is also estimated that 19 percent of parolees that were re-incarcerated were homeless upon their arrest. Additionally, the Interagency Council on the Homeless reports that 18 percent of all homeless people have spent time in either a state or federal prison.

### Mental Health and Substance Abuse Challenges

Many inmates receive the proper medical treatment needed while incarcerated, however, access to appropriate mental health professionals and treatment is more limited. An inmate is twice more likely to have a serious mental health disorder such as schizophrenia, psychosis, major depression, bipolar disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder than the general population. A Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, *Mental Health Treatment in State Prisons (2000)* indicated that one in every eight state prisoners get some sort of mental health or counseling services each year. In many instances, “mental health and counseling services” means that the inmate is seen by a psychiatrist and given medication to regulate any antisocial behaviors. Due to budget constraints and staffing patterns, many correctional facilities do not offer regular counseling services to inmates suffering from mental illness, although such services are much needed.

Research by Beck and Maruschak (2001) indicates that nearly 13 percent of state inmates get mental health services on a regular basis. Of those inmates, 10 percent of them

take psychotropic medications that include antidepressants, stimulants, sedatives, tranquilizers or other anti-psychotic drugs to control their behavior. In five states there was a dramatic increase in the number of inmates receiving mental health treatment. Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, and Oregon, report that nearly 20 percent of all inmates are currently receiving psychotropic medications as part of their treatment.

Social and political changes have led to an increase in the inmate population with higher rates of mental illness. The previous two decades were marked with an increase in drug use and longer sentences for those convicted of drug related crimes. Additionally, with the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill from state psychiatric hospitals, many of these individuals found themselves involved in criminal behavior and now in the care of the criminal justice system.

A close look at the criminal characteristics that make up this trouble population paints an even more devastating picture. Ditton (1999) found that mentally ill inmates are more likely than other inmates to commit violent crimes. Fifty-three percent of mentally ill state prisoners were incarcerated for a violent crime. Of these mentally ill inmates, 13 percent are incarcerated for murder, 12 percent for sexual assault and 13 percent for robbery. A majority of these inmates were more likely to report that they knew the victim of their crime.

Additionally, this study found that mentally ill inmates exhibited high rates of homelessness, unemployment, alcohol and drug use, as well as physical and sexual abuse prior to their incarceration. In the 12 months prior to their arrest, more than 30 percent of mentally ill inmates reported being homeless and indicated they were living on the streets or in a homeless shelter. This same group of mentally ill inmates indicated they were less likely than other offenders to have a job in this same time period. Approximately 40 percent of

inmates indicated they were not working during the period prior to their arrest. Nearly 30 percent of this population was receiving financial support from the federal government. This assistance came in the form of welfare, supplemental security income or another pension, and unemployment or workman's compensation.

A large portion of mentally ill inmates report that drug and alcohol use was prevalent in the household while they were growing up. Nearly 40 percent of mentally ill inmates reported that one or more parents had abused alcohol. About 38 percent of all mentally ill inmates reported signs of their own alcohol or drug dependence prior to incarceration. As evident by these reports, mental health issues are just part of the problem, substance abuse by inmates is just as significant.

According to Bureau of Justice Statistics, 70 percent of state inmates used drugs on a regular basis prior to their incarceration. It is also estimated that nearly 84 percent of state inmates were using drugs or alcohol around the time of their offense. With these statistics in mind, in 1994 Congress created the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program (RSAT) under the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act to provide state correctional departments funding for intensive drug and alcohol treatment. Funding for RSAT was the largest amount of money ever devoted to institutional drug and alcohol treatment, with \$270 million to be allocated over a five year period. Each state, the District of Columbia and United States Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) received .4 percent of the total funds to establish and maintain treatment for offenders with substance abuse problems.

To receive RSAT funding, programs must be at least six to 12 month programs that are separate from the general inmate population at a facility. Most of these programs, or

Therapeutic Communities, are mainly devoted to substance abuse treatment, but will also include other programs to further cognitive, behavioral, social, and educational development in participants. By March 2001 there were approximately 2000 RSAT programs in correctional facilities.

RSAT funding is only available for use by substance abuse programs, and not aftercare programs for inmates who have completed the program and wish to continue treatment. Research has indicated that the continuation of drug and alcohol treatment is a necessity for many inmates being released from incarceration. Inciardi (1996) and Martin et al (1999) found that inmates who had taken part in drug and alcohol treatment while in prison and after release from incarceration did better at staying drug free and crime free than those who had no treatment. In addition, they did better than inmates that had only received treatment while incarcerated. Research has continually indicated that drug offenders who participate in a continuum of care program have lower rates of relapse and recidivism. A University of Delaware study on prison based treatment programs that were followed by treatment in a community work-release center found that 18 months after release from prison the offenders who had 12-15 months of drug and alcohol treatment plus an additional six months of aftercare treatment were twice as likely to remain drug free and crime free than those offenders who received drug treatment with no continuum of care opportunities (Inciardi 1996).

### Family Challenges

A self-report survey of state and federal inmates in 1997 indicate there are approximately 1.5 million minor children that have at least one parent incarcerated. Using these findings at that time 2 percent of children, or 1 child in 50, in the United States has at

least one parent incarcerated. This is an ever increasing trend. Between 1991 and 1999 there was an increase of more than 100 percent in the number of children who had a parent in a state or federal correctional facility. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the number increased from 900,000 to approximately 2,000,000. In addition, it is estimated that nearly 3,500,000 parents are currently supervised by some form of a correctional system.

Losing a parent to incarceration has many effects on the children left behind. In most instances, great distances separate children from their parents while in prison. On average, women are housed 160 miles from their children and men are housed approximately 100 miles from home. These distances often keep family members from being able to visit on a regular basis. Without frequent visits, in many cases it becomes difficult to maintain family dynamics. Even if parents who are incarcerated use other methods of keeping contact, like phone calls, the high cost of collect calls limits the number of phone calls home. Despite these barriers, approximately 60 percent of mothers and 40 percent of fathers report having weekly contact with their children while they are incarcerated. This contact comes predominately the form of letters or phone calls. A majority of mothers and fathers indicate that they have never had a personal visit with their children since admission into prison. When they did get visits, they were sporadic and less than once a month.

However, the impact of distance is not the only challenge of incarceration on the family unit. When a parent is sent to prison, the entire family dynamics change. The family structure is altered, the financial stability changes, and support system is often dramatically altered. Frequently the stress of having a spouse away for an extended period of time causes strain on the martial relationship. Research indicates that many times a wife or girlfriend of an inmate often experiences a great deal of personal growth and change while their partner is

away. Many times the person left behind in the relationship becomes independent and self-sufficient. These changes can alter the expected role of the incarcerated family member upon their release from incarceration. Frequently during the time spent in prison, there have been changes in the family dynamic that include alternative parental figures. For example, while the mother is away serving her prison term, an aunt or another female role model may enter a child's life. Upon the return of the mother to the family unit, there could be stress and rejection that could preclude her from regaining her role in the family unit.

However, fewer than half of the parents in state prisons indicated prior to their incarceration they were the primary care giver of their children. Children were more likely to be living with their mother prior to her incarceration. When questioned about who is the current care giver for their children while they are incarcerated, over 80 percent of the parents said that the child/children were living with the other parent. Approximately 20 percent of parents indicated the child/children were living with grandparents or other relatives.

Due to a large percentage of parents being convicted of violent offences and drug trafficking, many parents are sentenced to extensive prison terms. On average, they are sentenced to 12 years in state prison. Additionally, fathers have on average five years longer than those of mothers due to the nature of the crime that sent them to prison. If the parent was the primary custodian of the child prior to incarceration, in more extreme instances, once released from prison, there is a legal battle that might be just beginning. Some parents have their parental rights terminated while they are incarcerated. The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act gave states the right to begin the termination of parental rights when a child has been placed in foster care for 15 months out of a 22 month time period. Because the average



sentence is longer than 22 months required by law, many incarcerated parents are subject to the federal regulation requiring their rights be terminated if their children are not placed in family foster care.

Child support is another issue frequently present in a parent's life as they are preparing for life once released from incarceration. Parents who are subject to formal child support payments are under increased pressure to find employment and to resume payments. In many states, child support payments continue to accumulate during the parent's prison sentence.

### Summary

The federal government as well as state and local authorities has witnessed the effects of inmates being released from incarceration with no re-entry planning. Where many inmates come out from behind prison walls with little or no skills equipped to help them adjust to a life of freedom and responsibilities, the government has stepped in to help ensure this trend changes. There have been increased national grants and programs designed to assist the offender prior to his release from incarceration. The government has identified four major areas that create obstacles for the inmates' ability to re-enter society and become productive citizens – employment, housing, mental health and substance abuse, and family challenges. This chapter outlined these areas and attempted to explain the significance of these challenges to a person preparing to be released from incarceration. Through legislative measures such as the National Second Chance Act and the Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative, there have been more funds established and set aside for correctional professionals to help inmates be released back into society with the skills they will need to create and maintain a crime free life once they have paid completed their prison sentence.

## CHAPTER III

### THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: STRATEGICALLY PLANNING FOR RE-ENTRY

Oklahoma has been incarcerating prisoners since its statehood. However, inmates were not kept in Oklahoma to serve out their prison sentence. Instead offenders were transferred to Kansas Penitentiary to carry out their prison sentence. During this time period Ms. Kate Barnard was Commissioner of Charities and Corrections. She got numerous complaints about the way Oklahoma inmates were being treated by Kansas prison officials. To get an accurate portrayal of what was happening to Oklahoma inmates, she reportedly took a tour of the facility. As a result of her findings she came back to Oklahoma and made the first efforts to enable Oklahoma inmates to serve their prison sentence in Oklahoma. When asked what type of prison she wanted for prisons in Oklahoma, she replied, “The best prison is one that turns out the largest percentage of people who never return to a life of crime” (Oklahoma Department of Corrections History, 2000).

Over the years the Oklahoma Department of Corrections has continued to redefine its goals as a department. There has recently been a paradigm shift for the department where re-entry is no longer viewed as a program, but a process. Re-entry is defined by Department as:

A systematic continuum of treatment, services, and processes that are integrated into all facets of the offender’s incarceration at all levels of security. The Department of Corrections, in partnership with appropriate agencies maintains an infrastructure of offender assessment and effective programming to include comprehensive planning for offender transition to the community. The primary goal of this process is the reduction of offender recidivism; achieved by providing adequate cognitive, academic, vocational, substance abuse treatment, and living skills while underscoring the philosophy the re-entry process begins at the point of reception (Handy 2005).

## A New Way to Look at an Old Problem

When an inmate is sentenced to serve time in the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, the inmate is first sent to the Lexington Assessment and Reception Center in Lexington, OK. The inmate remains at this facility for approximately two weeks and is evaluated by medical staff to include a physical to include medical, dental, mental health and optometry examinations. The inmate is also be administered a psychological interview and a psychological referral is made if appropriate.

Additionally, during this time, the inmate undergoes a battery of objective risk assessment testing that determines what assessed needs the inmate needs to focus on during incarceration. Such testing includes a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), a reading achievement test, and the Level of Service Inventory – Revised, the most popular risk/need assessment instrument for offenders. The LSI-R identifies ten areas of assessment. If an offender scores above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in any section of the LSI-R the offender will have that subsection identified as an assessed need for programmatic participation.

The categories identified in the LSI-R include emotional stability, criminal history, education and employment, financial, attitudes and orientation, companions, accommodations, family and marital, leisure and alcohol and drugs. The identifiers outlined by the LSI-R are representative of many of the correctional programming offered by many correctional departments throughout the nation.

## Risk Assessment

The testing instruments given while at Lexington Assessment and Reception Center help determine the risk that inmates have for re-offending and will help identify the level of

treatment needed while incarcerated. Inmates who score higher on risk assessment tests will have greater need for treatment services offered by the Department. Identifying levels of treatment programs serves two purposes: it allows a prioritization of treatment resources and it ensures that correctional treatment programs do not treat those offenders whose risks that could be increased by inappropriate levels of treatment. Andrews and Bonta (2003) indicate that there is a relationship between risk levels and treatment outcomes in terms of recidivism rates. In their research, four other recidivism studies are highlighted that indicate when risk levels and treatment levels are not appropriate, recidivism rates of offenders increase.

Table I. Studies on Risk Level and Treatment Level

| <u>Study</u>               | <u>Risk Level</u> | <u>Minimal Treatment</u> | <u>Intensive Treatment</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| O'Donnell et al (1971)     | Low               | 16%                      | 22%                        |
|                            | High              | 78%                      | 56%                        |
| Baird et al (1979)         | Low               | 3%                       | 10%                        |
|                            | High              | 37%                      | 18%                        |
| Andrews & Kiessling (1980) | Low               | 12%                      | 17%                        |
|                            | High              | 58%                      | 31%                        |
| Bonta et al (2000)         | Low               | 15%                      | 32%                        |
|                            | High              | 51%                      | 32%                        |

Identifying the needs that an inmate should address throughout incarceration is only one component to effective management of offenders. Most correctional departments utilize a risk assessment instrument to determine the appropriate custody level that an inmate should be housed. The classification instrument that the Oklahoma Department of Corrections uses is the Custody Assessment Scale. There are separate forms used for male and female offenders that identify areas of consideration based on subsequent research findings. Both forms of classification have two central components – the offender's risk to the community

and the offender's risk to the institution. By applying the appropriate score each of the sections of the Custody Assessment Scale a custody level is achieved and that determines the type of security in which the inmate will be housed.

This Custody Assessment Scale changes frequently as it is based on the offender's progress throughout their incarceration. Offenders are assessed with points for their most severe current charge as well as prior charges within certain time periods (for male offenders only), number of severe assessed needs (female only) and any escapes or escape attempts. These items help determine the level of risk that the offender poses to the community. The second portion of the scale determines the risk to the institution. Here offenders are assessed with points for their misconduct record, to include the number of active misconduct reports as well as the severity of these offenses. Offenders have the opportunity to have points removed from the scale based on their assessed program completions, adjustment to incarceration, and current age. The sum of the scale determines the appropriate custody level. There are mandatory and discretionary overrides available for the case manager to consider on a case-by-case basis.

In best case scenarios, as an offender gets closer to release they would move to lower security facilities to encourage appropriate reintegration back into the community. However, many inmates frequently discharge from medium security facilities. Institutional releases from medium security occur for numerous reasons, but the most common reason is that the offender is incarcerated on a serious crime or has other security concerns that could put the public at risk if housed at lower security. To address the needs of inmates who are releasing from medium security prisons the Department has adopted other measures to create a successful transition from incarceration to the community.

## Establishing a Plan for Re-entry

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections utilizes a case plan to structure the planned program participation for each inmate's incarceration. The case plan is a document that identifies the assessed need to include the level of treatment required, the projected enrollment for the offender, and the date of actual completion. The initial assessment is based on crime, length of sentence, physical health, mental health, Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), and other objective assessment instruments. The LARC or Initial Case Plan serves as referral information for re-assessment of inmate progress and adjustment. Offenders sentenced to death, Life without Parole, Immigration and Naturalization Service detainees, or sentences greater than 100 years do not have case plans. Instead, the Department has determined these groups have plans that concentrate on institutional adjustment and productive work opportunities while incarcerated.

By operating from the inmate case plan, the facility staff are able to identify what category of inmate programs an inmate requires in order to meet their assessed needs from reception. The case plan also outlines what stage of the offender's incarceration they should participate in a facility program. The following time frames have been determined by the Department to maximize the treatment.

Table II. Assessed Need and Program Time Frame

| <b>Assessed Need</b>                           | <b>Program Time Frame</b>   |
|--|---|
| Physical Health and emotional stability        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This need is continually monitored and is considered appropriate at any time placement is needed.</li> </ul>   |
| Criminal History, Companions or Accommodations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offenders are encouraged to enter cognitive behavioral programs as soon as transfer from Lexington Assessment and Reception Center.</li> </ul>   |
| Education/Employment                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As soon as they transfer from Lexington Assessment and Reception Center to a general population yard.</li> <li>• Vocational training for inmates will take place within 18 months from their discharge date and will be in accordance with their operating procedure for vocational training.</li> </ul>   |
| Financial                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within two years of an inmate's release. These programs may be taken along with other assessed educational programs.</li> </ul>  |
| Re-entry                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These programs are designed to prepare the offender for release from incarceration. These program needs will be considered in the offender's pre-release plan developed by the case manager and unit team.</li> </ul>  |
| Alcohol and Drug                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offenders identified with a high need for substance abuse treatment will be encouraged to enroll in substance abuse treatment programs when they have 2000 days until they discharge.</li> <li>• Inmates with a moderate need for substance abuse treatment should be encouraged to enroll in programs when they have 1100 days remaining to serve.</li> </ul> |
| Reintegration                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These programs are available for an offender if they are within 330 days of release.</li> </ul>  |
| Sex Offender Treatment                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When offenders are convicted of sex related crimes there will be additional testing to determine the level of risk to re-offending. Offenders who have been identified with having higher levels of risk will be able to participate in sex offender treatment in a priority position.</li> </ul>  |

## Re-entry Tracks

Because every offender has a specific set of needs to prepare them for release from incarceration, the Department has established four Re-entry Tracks to work with inmates needs during this transition period: Community Corrections, PROTECT, referral to a transition coordinator, or institutional pre-release. The unit manager is responsible for working with the inmate to determine which re-entry track they qualify.

In ideal situations an offender would be eligible for community corrections. When offenders are housed in community corrections they are offered the opportunity to participate in work programs, substance abuse aftercare programs, or further their education. At community corrections inmates are given more responsibility and privileges to prepare them for life after release. However, many inmates are not eligible for community corrections as a form of re-entry opportunity. Decisions for community eligibility are based on the risk assessment instrument that the Department uses to classify inmates, their time left to serve, and the crime for which they are sentenced.

The second re-entry track is Partnership for Reintegration of Offenders through Employment and Community Treatment (PROTECT), a federally funded grant that targets youthful serious and violent offenders re-entering the community. To be eligible for PROTECT, an offender must be 18 to 35 years old, have been incarcerated for at least one year, score 29 or above on the LSI-R (indicating a high need for treatment) or be a convicted sex offender, and must be returning to Oklahoma County, Oklahoma. PROTECT resources indicate that from 1995 to 1999, 63 percent of Oklahoma's released inmates were 18 to 36 years of age. Additionally, these offenders had a 24.3 percent recidivism rate where offenders over 35 only had a 19.9 recidivism rate.



PROTECT is a re-entry track that has three phases of operation. The following is a representation of the goals associated with each phase of the grant.

Table III. PROTECT Phases and Goals Identified for Each Phase

| <u>PROTECT Phase</u> | <u>Goals</u>  |
|----------------------|---|
| Phase I              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins with the offender at the Assessment and Reception Center.</li> <li>• Assessed Needs are Identified and worked on throughout incarceration.</li> </ul>   |
| Phase II             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for controlling and restoring life back in the community.</li> <li>• A transition worker for PROTECT will meet with the offender and their case manager approximately 90 days prior to release</li> <li>• Once released a PROTECT worker will have daily contact with the offender to assist with treatment needs that will need to be met, employment, family arrangements or any other needs that arise during this transitional period.</li> <li>• Can last up to 90 days if needed.</li> </ul> |
| Phase III            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing responsibility and productivity.</li> <li>• Community-based, long term support</li> <li>• Participation in aftercare programs tied to assessed needs.</li> <li>• Transition worker will remain in contact with the offender and the participating agencies.</li> <li>• Can last up to three years</li> </ul>  |

The third re-entry track involves an inmate being referred to a Transition Coordinator. These coordinators are assigned to work with high risk offenders at select facilities run by the Department of Corrections. Currently there are four facilities that have transition coordinators available to inmates: Oklahoma State Reformatory, Dick Connor Correctional Center, Jess Dunn and Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (only from the Taft Unit) and William S. Key Correctional Center. These facilities were selected based on the number of

high risk offenders that release from the Department of Corrections at medium security facilities.

Only offenders housed at these facilities are eligible for participation in this track. Offenders may be referred to transition coordinators after the unit manager meets with the inmate to discuss personal re-entry plans for an upcoming release. If an offender does not meet criteria for community corrections or PROTECT they could be referred to meet with a transition coordinator. Inmates eligible for this re-entry track must be incarcerated for at least one year, have a high or moderate LSI-R score (a score of 19) or have been incarcerated for more than 10 years. The offender must also have a favorable recommendation from the parole board to be paroled to the street. If an offender is within six months of his projected release date they may also be eligible for this re-entry track.

The final re-entry track is the use of case management. This case management re-entry track is available for offenders who do not meet the requirements of the other options. Those offenders will be able to utilize a facility sponsored program or their case manager for re-entry planning options. These may vary from facility to facility.

### The Role of the Case Manager

The case manager is responsible for the classification of offenders to which they are assigned including making sure an offender is housed at the appropriate custody level. The case manager reviews all inmates' custody on an annual basis or as custody levels change – either increasing or decreasing the custody level of supervision outlined by departmental operating procedures. Additionally, the case manager is responsible for creating an inmate

accountability plan for the inmate. This plan addresses the offender's identified needs and monitors progress toward completing assessed needs.

If the inmate is six months from their anticipated release date, the case manager is responsible for developing an individual pre-release plan for the offender. The pre-release plan will focus on the offender's basic needs to create a successful transition from incarceration. The case manager is required to hold an interview with the inmate and review the Pre-Release Checklist with the offender. An interview with the inmate is conducted by utilizing the Pre-Release Checklist during the Adjustment Review. The Pre-Release Checklist includes verifying information regarding the offender's identification, the proposed residence once released and transportation on the day of discharge. The checklist also identifies if the offender has children and the social situation with the mother(s). Additionally, the checklist outlines financial responsibilities the offender may have, medical treatment needed, legal obligations and sex offender registration if required. This checklist also identifies any type of aftercare referrals for medical treatment, mental health treatment or substance abuse treatment. Case managers are required to have resource information for all regions within the state to provide accurate information to each offender.

### Summary

Since Oklahoma began to incarcerate its own inmates there has been a push to have inmates serve their prison sentence, return to society and not return to the system. The question has frequently been, "How?." In response to this ongoing quest, the Department of Corrections has taken a new stance on the re-entry process in recent years. An inmate now prepares for release within their first few days in custody. By utilizing assessment tools to identify needs and appropriate custody levels, the tools should be in place to prepare an

offender for a successful release from incarceration. The question of “What works” has yet to be answered, but the Department’s increased attention on programming indicates it believes that proper planning can help better prepare offenders for a life beyond the prison walls.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to identify the importance of correctional programming in the resocialization process for an inmate preparing for release. Additionally, this study examines if there is a gap between the Oklahoma Department of Corrections intentions and what actually occurs at the facility level. Specifically, this research focuses on efforts provided to inmates housed at medium security correctional facilities. This research looks at socialization in terms of assimilation into the prison culture and the attempt to leave this world behind through effective prison programming.

The methodology utilized to conduct this research is qualitative in nature thus enabling the researcher to expand on the statistical information regarding program options for inmates confined at medium security prisons in Oklahoma. The researcher interviewed personnel who work directly with inmate programming for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and contract facilities. This population was selected because the researcher had easy access to correctional staff members based on her own six years of work in the correctional setting. Lofland and Lofland (1995) indicate researchers may often “start where you are” in qualitative research. The decision to interview staff members familiar with correctional programming permits the researcher to consider new correctional re-entry policies and their implication on the re-entry process within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. This research group would additionally be able to discuss and the availability of correctional programming for inmates prior to release from incarceration. It is the goal of the researcher to examine if there is a gap between the stated goals and objectives of the

Department of Corrections to prepare inmates for release and the day-to-day practices within correctional institutions. By interviewing both officials within the Department of Corrections and staff members at the facility level, the researcher is able to gather information regarding the availability of correctional programs in regards to both policy and practice.

The researcher provides a series of semi-structured questions that explore the types of programs offered within medium security facilities, the theoretical framework behind selected programs, the expected outcomes of participation in selected programs, and any identified outcome measures of programs and program participation. Additionally, the researcher utilizes statistical information provided by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to get a more complete picture of the programming opportunities offered within the correctional setting.

Qualitative research is usually informal and semi-structured, and allows people to contribute and share their views and feelings in a conversational format, without the constraints of a structured questionnaire. The aim of qualitative research is to discover the range, psychological nature, motivations and needs behind participant attitudes, behavior and observation. Because of these characteristics, qualitative research is the ideal methodology for this research project. In the qualitative research design the researcher does not formulate their own hypothesis or potential outcome of the research. Instead, the researcher lets the subjects' responses dictate the research outcome. The results of qualitative research are descriptive of the research topic rather than predictive of a predetermined hypothesis from the researcher.

Qualitative research methodology offers an opportunity for subjects to describe in their own words the particular topic being researched (May 2001). Qualitative research does

not require the subject's answers to be confined to the researcher's ideas of what is being studied. Instead, the researcher asks semi-structured questions to participants and their responses help formulate the hypothesis and theme of the research. Additionally, as Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate, qualitative research methodologies tend to be high in validity and they enable the researcher to gain a more complete and accurate understanding of the subject at hand.

While there are a variety of research methodologies that fall under the umbrella term qualitative methods, all methodologies share the similar assumption that the respondents or participants are the experts on why they think and behave in the way that they do (Marshall & Rossman 1989). Qualitative researchers are often skilled in the arts of observing, interviewing and listening so as to gain an in-depth understanding of what the world looks like through the participants' eyes. Generally conducted by the researcher (rather than an interviewer), qualitative research is usually based on a discussion guide, which details for the subject the issues that will be covered during the interview or group discussion. However, no two qualitative discussions are the same, since the respondent(s) have a significant influence on the process.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) address the dependability of qualitative research methods by encouraging the researcher to re-examine several key concepts of conventional research methodology. Instead of focusing on the reliability and validity of research findings, they suggest concentrating on dependability, credibility, conformability and transferability.

The traditional quantitative view of reliability is based on the assumption of replicability or repeatability of research findings, or whether another researcher would obtain the same results. The idea of dependability, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for the

researcher to account for the continually changing context within which research occurs. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the social setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. The credibility assumption involves confirming that the results of qualitative research are plausible from the perspective of the subject of the research. However, qualitative research in its very nature tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Confirmability in qualitative research methodology refers to the degree to which the results could be substantiated by others. There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Another researcher can take a "devil's advocate" role with respect to the results, and this process can be documented. Additionally, after the study is complete, the researcher can conduct a data audit to examine the data collection and analysis procedures. During this process, the researcher can formulate judgments about the potential for bias or distortion. Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized to other settings. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the researcher. The qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by doing a meticulous job of detailing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research.

### Gaining Access to Participants

A letter for permission to research was sent to the Justin Jones, the Director of the Department of Corrections to initiate the research process in accordance with DOC Operating Procedure 021501, Procedures for Regulating Research. This request was then sent to the Department of Corrections Data Analysis where the request is then sent for review to the



appropriate regional/deputy director and the facility head/district supervisor or supervisor of the facility where the research would like to be conducted. As a part of this process, the researcher needed to provide the Department with the names and positions of personnel that would be contacted for this study.

The names and addresses of participants of this study were obtained from the Oklahoma Department of Corrections website, <http://www.doc.state.ok.us>. Additional information was obtained by contacting each medium security facility that held Oklahoma inmates and requesting the name of the Program Manager and Education Principal. These positions are often the primary coordinator for inmate programs within the correctional facility. In a few instances, the name of the Deputy Warden over Programs was obtained. In facilities that have Transition Coordinators, that name was requested. Additional names were provided of staff within the DOC Programs Unit for potential participation.

For private or contract facilities similar methods were used to obtain permission to interview staff familiar with the research topic. For these facilities, a letter was drafted to each Warden requesting permission to conduct an interview with staff at their facility. Once permission was granted, interviews were set up with staff in the program and education departments.

#### Description of the Participants

There were a total of twenty-one interviews for this project. Participants were staff members working for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections or contract facilities holding inmates for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. Interviews for this study lasted from twenty minutes to an hour and a half. All interviews were scheduled in advance and the researcher contacted the participant at a pre-designated time.

Staff members from the institutional level worked with medium security inmates and were familiar with program opportunities for inmates approaching their discharge dates. Most staff members interviewed were also familiar with the program criteria for inmates to participate in programs to prepare for release. There were sixteen interviews from medium security correctional facilities. Participant's had a variety of positions in the institution including case managers, counselors, education supervisors, program managers, assistant and deputy wardens, transition coordinators, and other program instructors. Staff members interviewed from administrative positions within the Department of Corrections were directly involved with re-entry and program planning for offenders.

#### In-Depth Semi-Structured Interviews

Due to the nature of this topic, semi-structured in-depth interviews were be conducted. By utilizing this technique of qualitative methodology, the researcher can seek clarification and elaboration on the answers given during the interview session. This form of methodology permits the researcher to probe deeper beyond the initial response of the subject. By utilizing this format, it is the goal of the researcher to permit and even encourage the subjects to answer questions in their own terms.

By utilizing semi-structured questions, the researcher is be able to obtain interviews that are abundant in experiences, opinions, and knowledge of the subject. For this study, the subject's personal experiences with the research topic are essential. One of the goals of this project is to determine if there is a gap in the goals of the Department of Correction's philosophy of preparing inmates for release and what actually occurs at the institutional level. With semi-structured interviews of personnel who are directly responsible for the program

opportunities within the correctional setting, it is possible to determine if there is a disparity between the goals and the outcome of effective correctional programming.

The researcher telephoned each subject and asked them to participate in a brief (30 minutes to 2 hours) semi-structured telephone interview. If they granted permission, the interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. If they did not grant permission, notes were being taken during the interview.

### Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews were the method for conducting all interviews for this research. All participants were contacted at work and asked a series of questions as outlined in the interview guide. All interviews were conducted by the researcher who read the question to the respondent over the phone and recorded their answers. All questions in the research interview guide are relatively straightforward due to the researcher not being able to utilize any type of visual aid for clarification. Additionally, for time and cost effectiveness, telephone interviews are the most productive method of reaching participants of this study. Telephone interviews are frequently successful methods of obtaining data for research areas as they do not impose limits on length and provide the researcher an opportunity to ask for clarification and to probe the subject for more detail.

### The Interview Guide

The interview guide for this research study is a ten question document that addresses program opportunities available for inmates housed in medium security prisons. Questions are simplistic in nature and are designed to gather two types of information for the research.

The first type of questions inquire about the availability of programs including, the types of programs offered at the facility, number of inmates participating in programs, criteria for program participation and outcome measures associated with program participation. The second type of questions help determine the facility outlook on program opportunities. These questions include inquiring on facility mission statement, the role of programs in the mission, case management issues and the re-entry process. There are also questions that ask about familiarity with Project Protect, suggestions for change in facility programs and the discharge process for an inmate.

These questions are designed to give the researcher a deeper insight and understanding of the facility efforts to provide inmates with programmatic opportunities to better prepare them for release. All questions are open ended so that the respondent may give detailed answers and elaborate when necessary. Additionally, open ended questions will provide the researcher the opportunity to ask for clarification to any responses participants may have.

#### Ethical Issues in Conducting the Research

All participants were made aware of risks of participation. However, because participants are not questioned on their personal beliefs about the research topic, only about their work within or contracted by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, there is very little risk associated with participation. The researcher used pseudonyms for all participants and changed any identifiable characteristics of places, names of institutions, and incidents reported throughout the research process. Additionally, all subjects were given informed consent documents prior to participation. As Mann and Stewart (2000) indicate, “informed consent involves giving participants comprehensive and correct information about the

research study, and ensuring that they understand fully what participation would entail". For the purposes of this research, participants are not required to sign documents indicating their participation. They were provided a copy of the approved consent form to keep for their records.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained through the qualitative research process of semi-structured telephone interviews was reviewed and coded to identify similar themes. Throughout the entire process of qualitative data analysis the researcher engaged in memoing, or recording reflective notes about what the researcher learns from the data collected during the interview process. The idea is to write memos when there are ideas and insights and to include those memos as additional data to be analyzed. Typically, in quantitative analysis, this involves assigning numerical labels to categories of answers that would be grouped and counted. However, in qualitative analysis, the coding process involves assigning word or phrase labels to responses in order for similar answers to be grouped and analyzed by the researcher.

Qualitative researchers usually transcribe their data, including notes from interviews, observational notes, memos, etc. into word processing documents. It is these transcriptions that are later analyzed. It is here that the researcher must carefully read the transcribed data, line by line, and divide the data into meaningful analytical units. When the researcher identifies meaningful segments, they code them. Coding is defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names.

## Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methodology to be used for this study. This chapter reiterated the purpose of this research, to examine how national re-entry trends and correctional program opportunities are changing to better prepare offenders for release from incarceration. This chapter provided a brief description of qualitative methodology and the means that the researcher plans to evaluate the data from the interviews. This section examined how the researcher planned to gain access to the interview participants, the type of interviews that would be conducted, the interview guide and data analysis that would be used to evaluate all findings.

## CHAPTER V

### MAKING A DIFFERENCE? ASSESSING PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

This chapter describes the findings of twenty-one interviews of staff members who are familiar with correctional programming opportunities offered to inmates at medium security prisons in Oklahoma. Staff members with the Department of Corrections Program Unit were contacted for information as well as personnel working directly with offenders in medium security prisons that house Oklahoma inmates.

Staff members were asked about several categories of questions regarding the types of correctional programming offered for offenders to prepare them for release. Questions asked had themes of actual programs offered for offenders, criteria of program participation, the role of programs in correctional settings, any outcome measures associated with program participation and if correctional programming was a part of their company and facility mission.

There were eleven medium security prisons that were contacted for this research. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections has seven state run medium security correctional institutions: R.B. “Dick” Conner Correctional Center, Hominy; James Crabtree Correctional Center, Helena; Joseph Harp Correctional Center, Lexington; Lexington Correctional Center, Lexington; Mack Alford Correctional Center, Stringtown; Oklahoma State Reformatory, Granite and Mabel Bassett Correctional Center, McLoud. Additionally, there are four contract or privately operated correctional facilities that house medium security inmates for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections: Davis Correctional Facility, Holdenville, and Cimarron Correctional Facility, Cushing, both owned and operated by Corrections

Corporation of America; Great Plains Correctional Facility, Hinton, owned and operated by Cornell Companies, Inc. and Lawton Correctional Facility, Lawton, owned and operated by GEO Group, Inc.

There were five staff members contacted that work for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Administration. These individuals work directly with the policy and procedure that governs the program opportunities for inmates housed by the Department. These research participants and have first hand knowledge of the selection of programs available in the individual institutions as well as the criteria for program participation.

As outlined in previous chapters, from 1999 to 2000 the number of inmates released from incarceration increased from 400,000 to more than 600,000. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that nearly 65% of new releases will be rearrested within three years of their release date. A recidivism study in Oklahoma found that 26.2% of inmates released in 2000 had relapsed into criminal behavior and committed new crimes within this same time period following discharge from incarceration. With this level of recidivism there has been an increased effort within correctional programmatic frameworks to better prepare inmates for their release back into society. Correctional policy makers have made numerous attempts to create a system where an offender would be able to serve his sentence and then be released back into the community without the risk of re-offending. Research has identified several stumbling blocks that inmates face upon their return to the community including, but not limited to re-establishing family and social support networks, securing affordable housing, obtaining employment, receiving medical treatment and finding transportation. There has again been the call to find a way to put community services in place so these hindrances will



be less of an obstacle for inmates who have completed their prison sentence and are looking for a new life.

The following sections of this chapter focus on conclusions reached from data collected and compiled from interviews with staff that are familiar with correctional programming opportunities for inmates incarcerated with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. The analysis from these interviews highlights several important areas: the described goals of correctional programming, the effectiveness of correctional programming, the role of the case manager in re-entry planning, and identifying if there is a gap between what the Department indicates is being done to prepare inmates for release and what actually occurs in at the facility level. The research will describe the pattern of responses in terms of overriding themes and it will attempt to relate them to literature. The conclusions outlined in this chapter will be supported with direct quotes from the research participants.

### A Meaningful Public Service

One of the first questions asked to participants of this study was the role of correctional programming in the mission of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections and their facility specifically. Most individuals were aware of the Department's mission statement, Protecting You Is Our Mission. Contract facilities were also aware of their own company's mission. When it came to identifying if they thought programs played a part of that mission there wasn't as much certainty. One respondent simply said, "We are required to provide programs to X number of inmates. We have to keep them in programs. That affects our mission and how we do things."

However, several of the participants interviewed for this research indicated that correctional programming works hand in hand with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections mission statement. One person indicated that this could be done in a way, “to provide a meaningful public service is to equip these guys with the social skills that they need to come out and negotiate successfully and to be the best they can out in our society.” Another person who works directly with inmates in the institution indicated there was a strong link between correctional programming and the mission of their facility indicated that the role of programs in the correctional setting is designed to assist in the transition from a lifestyle that is open to criminal activity to that of a law abiding citizen. This individual indicated:

If we were to just take offenders and just house them, not give them any programs, then there won't be any changes for when they do get back out into the streets. Our mission is to take offenders and offer them programs as a way to change so they don't have to be released and fall back into the same lifestyle that put them in prison in the first place. You don't want to return offenders to society the same way that they came in.

One correctional staff member said the role of programs was essential to the success of the Department and their individual facility. This person indicated, “Programs are vital the facility and the inmate. They provide an outlet for inmate activity. Programs provide a means to improve themselves and bettering their chances of not coming back.”

Another person mirrored this response and went on to stress the role of programs in adequately preparing an inmate for life where everything is no longer decided for him:

One of the things that I always stress is that while we have them in our custody we can tell them you're going to go live here and you're going to go live here and then here. We can tell them exactly where they are going to live. Once they are released that stops. We cannot tell them where they are going to live.

This respondent went on to talk about the importance of correctional programming to not only help the offender prepare for life once released, but to protect taxpayers when the inmate is released from a total custody situation and back in society. This individual went on to describe what could potentially happen if an inmate is not offered the opportunity to participate in correctional programming:

If one of these guys gets out of prison and comes and lives next to me I do not want someone coming out of OSP where it's basically a warehouse situation. Where they aren't working on their issues and where they are getting madder and madder every day – where they are almost legitimately getting madder and madder everyday. Where they are left to sit there and resolve their own problems the way they have always done it through anger, malice, malicious designs, just waiting to become a predator in action.

#### An Overview of Program Opportunities Reported in Oklahoma Prisons

Each correctional facility contacted for this research did have program opportunities available for inmates. However, the degree and range of programs actually found in the medium security institutions varied considerably from the number of programs that the Oklahoma Department of Corrections indicates that it offers statewide. Information on the Department's website indicates that the following programs are offered at all facilities: Moral Reconciliation Therapy; speak out programs; mental health and substance abuse programs to include interpersonal communication skills; Rational Behavior Training; Substance Abuse Education; stress management training and Treatment Alternatives for Drinking Drivers. The Department also indicates that the following educational programs are offered statewide: Literacy Program, Adult Basic Education (ABE), Chapter I, General Education Development (GED), High School Diploma, vocational opportunities, post secondary education opportunities that include college/ Talk-Back TV, Daily Living Skills and Fine Arts/

Humanities opportunities (<http://www.doc.state.ok.us/Programs/StateWideProg.htm>)  
(<http://www.doc.state.ok.us/Private%20Prisons/privprog.htm>).

Upon interviewing staff members at each of these medium security institutions most participants indicated that a majority of these programs are not currently available. One staff member indicated that through the years that their facility has had several of the classes that the Department has indicated, but the frequency has varied throughout the years.

We do have a lot of program opportunities for inmates to better prepare themselves for release, but not the one's that you've asked about. I can't tell you how long it's been since we've had a couple of those. I've been at this facility for several years and some of them haven't been offered during that whole time. Some of the one's that you asked about we have, but not very often.

Tables IV and V are an outline of additional programs available to inmates according to the Oklahoma Department of Corrections websites mentioned above. These tables represent additional programs that are facility specific for offenders to take part in to better prepare themselves for their release from incarceration and a successful life once released. Many of these programs fit into the categories of correctional assessed needs identified by the LSI-R and other objective testing instruments that the inmate had conducted while at Lexington Assessment and Reception Center prior to being transferred to a general population yard to complete their prison sentence.

Table IV. Programs Reported Available in State Medium Security Facilities

| <b><u>State Medium Security Facility</u></b> | <b><u>Programs Available</u></b>  |
|--|---|
| R.B “Dick” Conner Correctional Center        | New Life Behavior<br>Moral Reconciliation Therapy<br>Thinking For a Change<br>Keys to Successful Life Choices<br>Alcoholics Anonymous<br>SMART<br>Anger Management                        |
| James Crabtree Correctional Center           | Cage Your Rage<br>Mediation Program<br>Wild Horse and Burro Adoption and Training Center<br>Strait Talk / One-on-Ones   |
| Joseph Harp Correctional Center              | Habilitation Program<br>Residential Sex Offender Program<br>Lifeline Program<br>Fathers and Children Together   |
| Lexington Correctional Center                | Friends for Folks   |
| Mack Alford Correctional Center              | Save our Kids<br>Stay Straight<br>Transitional Living Skills Program  |
| Oklahoma State Reformatory                   | Free as an Eagle<br>Freedom Forum<br>Transitional Living<br>Kairos<br>Winner’s Integration Network  |
| Mabel Bassett Correctional Center            | New Beginnings SAE<br>Children and Mother Program<br>Winner’s Integration Project<br>Women’s Integration Project<br>Economics are Realistic Necessity<br>Substance Abuse Family Education |

Table V. Programs Reported Available in State Contract Medium Security Facilities

| <u>Contract Medium Security Facility</u> | <u>Programs Available</u>  |
|--|--|
| Davis Correctional Facility              | Life Skills I<br>Creative Writing/Newspaper Production<br>Returning to Society<br>Applied Math<br>Lau Bach Tutoring<br>Pod Tutoring Program<br>Leather and Glass Shops<br>Moral Reconation Therapy<br>Therapeutic Community  |
| Cimarron Correctional Facility           | English as a Second Language<br>Zig Ziglar I Can Program<br>Therapeutic Community<br>Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous<br>Marriage and Family Counseling<br>Alcohol Chemical Treatment Series<br>Jacobs Trading Company<br>Hy-Tec Manufacturing                                     |
| Great Plains Correctional Facility       | Art Classes (Basic Art I & II, Art Appreciation, Ceramics and Pottery & Open Art Classes)<br>Therapeutic Community<br>Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous<br>Moral Reconation Therapy<br>Cage Your Rage<br>Pre-release Job Preparation Classes<br>Prison Industry Enhancement Program |
| Lawton Correctional Facility             | Therapeutic Community  |

#### Criteria for Success

Nearly all of the staff members at the facility level were aware of the criteria for correctional programming opportunities. As indicated in the previous chapter regarding the Oklahoma Department of Corrections policy for inmates' participating in programs, each program has set criteria for an inmate. Many of these criteria are based on the results of the standardized testing that was conducted while at Lexington Assessment and Reception

Center as well as an offender's time left to serve on his or her prison sentence. Many staff interviewed for this project indicated that their facility paid close attention to these criteria when selecting inmates to take part in programming. One staff person described the process at their facility and indicated they "Really look at guys first with assessed needs. We really try to get the guys with assessed needs into the program first. They are the ones that get priority placement." Another staff person talked about the time that an inmate has left to serve on their prison sentence and the role that it has on the inmate getting into correctional programs and indicated that "Some of the criteria does have to do with the inmate's time remaining. For instance in the drug treatment program they like for inmates to be within 2000 days of going home. The closer the inmate is to discharge the better their chances are in getting into a program."

At the administrative level all staff members were aware of the criteria. However, administrative staff members were able to offer the theoretical framework that was reviewed when determining criteria to be implemented into correctional policy. Program administration staff members indicated that a criterion for program participation and availability was a result of empirical studies that showed characteristics of programs that resulted in offenders not returning to prison. Many of these programs have time associations that recommend that the offender participate in programming immediately preceding their release from incarceration. Additionally staff members cited the study conducted by Andrews and Bonta (2003) that indicated the relationship between and risk levels and treatment outcomes in terms of recidivism rates.

When institutional staff members were asked about their thoughts on the limitations and restrictions placed on inmates wanting programs, there was a great deal of dissention. Staff members were very frank about the criteria for an offender to get access to drug treatment while in prison:

Well, they have to have at least a minimum of 2000 days left to serve for any type of drug and alcohol treatment. That's fairly recent criteria that the Department has imposed on us. I have mixed feelings about that. The rationale behind that change is, "Get these guys drug and alcohol treatment prior to them going to the streets or as close as they can. That way they don't get treatment and then get put back in the yard."

Another staff member mimicked this frustration as they responded to questions regarding the criteria for an inmate to get into a program but maybe didn't meet the criteria. Many respondents that worked directly with inmates in the prison setting indicated they thought the time restriction placed on treatment based programs could hinder people from trying to make positive changes. One person working directly with treatment programs expressed the following:

If you have a substance abuse problem, does it not make sense to go on a treatment program? Does it not make sense to treat the problem even if you are going to do time after you complete the program, even for a very long time? This could help cut down with even the drug trafficking on the yard. I mean, if you have a drug problem and you need help with it. Just because you are in prison doesn't mean that you can't find the drugs.

When facility personnel were asked about the rationale given behind the restriction process, there was often a lengthy explanation that reflected what Department of Corrections administrative staff had indicated about treatment being more effective the closer the inmate is to their release from incarceration. However, this research found that treatment practitioners were not certain that the day-to-day practice of this theory was applicable in the



prison setting. In fact, most interviewed regarding treatment programs indicated that treatment needs to be an ongoing process that extends beyond the initial treatment program and into daily living situations – even while incarcerated to better prepare inmates for the reality of life and temptations once released. One participant in the study commented on how difficult it was as a treatment professional it was difficult to follow the time guidelines associated with programs by the Department of Corrections:

The belief is that the treatment process gets unraveled by constant daily social contacts with the criminal element. That's good. I believe that and I support that. On the other hand, if a guy is doing a 10 year sentence and he comes over wanting to be in the program, it feels very sterile telling this inmate, "I'm sorry I cannot bring you in the treatment program when you are asking for help. But, because you have too much time you need to go back out on the yard and continue to get sicker and sicker. Then when you're down to so many days, and if you're still alive, then we'll bring you into the program. It's not like that literally, but is how it feels.

Another contributor had similar experiences and went on to discuss their view on the importance of getting drug treatment as a means to better manage the individual while incarcerated. This person works daily with the inmate population and really questioned the Department of Correction's rationale for placing time frames on offering an offender treatment. From a treatment point of view, this respondent questioned if the Department of Corrections wanted to actually treat the offender or simply manage the problem for their incarceration.

My thought on it is when an inmate comes into prison is when they have their largest substance abuse problem. And to put that program off for maybe 5000 days or whatever to get them help is hard. Even though because of lack of availability he or she may be clean. But, really what types of tools have you given them to keep them clean. If they come in, and we aren't treating the illness then, then what are we doing? We're leaving them the same that they were so they can further use or abuse while they are incarcerated. Otherwise we're leaving them until its close until they go home and saying, "Oops, you need treatment and you need to get clean. That is if you have an assessed need for it."

Staff members were asked if they knew why the criterion was established for each type of program. Many indicated they knew that the Department had done field research on the matter and that several published studies were used in determining the criteria, but that did not stop them from questioning the validity of those findings. One staff person questioned the responses of the Administration:

The response is always the same. DOC has spent a lot of money and a lot of time researching this and this is the result of it. I've talked to treatment managers and they all say the same. Those people don't come down here; they don't see what is going on. They don't consider both sides of it. At the meetings however, they tell us that they did. They tell us that they have considered both sides of it and the cause and the effects of it all to include the rates of recidivism in regards to treatment that it's more successful to have treatment right before they leave rather than right when they become incarcerated.

I look at it and I say, Um, okay if that's what you say. I mean they've spent all this time and money and surely something's had to come out of it. Why would they tell us this if it wasn't true?

#### Humanitarian Based Correctional Programming

Most respondents indicated that there were basic educational courses, vocational courses, substance abuse education and treatment and a cognitive behavior course, but not nearly the number of programs listed as being available at their facility. Additionally, there were several programs that are currently being offered at facilities that were not mentioned on the available programs list. Many of those programs included faith based programs as well as other types of humanitarian programs where offenders are offered opportunities to work on a project that will benefit a charitable organization or a needy population.

The humanitarian based programs offered at various correctional institutions have experienced great success according to the participants of this research. A somewhat unusual but very promising approach to address offenders' human needs is the use of animals in institutions. Many of these programs have a vocational skills component: inmates train dogs to become service dogs for the disabled, or they work with horses, either wild mustangs or retired race horses in need of rehabilitation. Although vocational training is certainly a major consideration, these programs are also highly therapeutic and rehabilitative according to staff members who work directly with inmates participating in these humanitarian based programs.

Three specific humanitarian based programs were mentioned during the course of this research that inmates can participate in while they are incarcerated. Each program varies in its efforts, but the desire to allow inmates to re-connect with society and to give something back is evident in each program. Wheels for the World is a program that works in conjunction with Joni and Friends, Inc. and takes used wheelchairs and refurbishes them and then gives them to people in third world countries who do not have the resources to obtain a wheelchair on their own. Two other facilities worked with animals to train them and then adopt them back into the community. One facility offers offenders a chance to work with wild horses and burrow's while another facility allows inmates to work with and train dogs from the local shelters so that they may be offered for adoption.

Prison animal training programs are becoming more and more prevalent throughout the nation. Prison animal training programs offer offenders positive ways to serve their prison sentence and to contribute back to society. These type of humanitarian based programs are

designed to do more than assist with the training of the animal – they offer the offender learn positive motivation skills, gain job relating skills and gain social skills experiences in addition to giving back to the community. Staff members at the institutions were very supportive of each of these programs and reported a great deal of success with each program, not only with the finished product, but within the inmate. One staff member from a facility that permits inmates to take part a program for training dogs indicated it was a complete success.

The inmates that actually take part in the program say that it's been very therapeutic for them. When you look at while in prison they are just responsible for themselves – when they take part in this program they suddenly have something else to take care of. This responsibility starts off in a structured program. It's been very positive program for everyone. It's been a very positive thing for not only the guys taking part in the program, but also for the guys around the program.

Another staff member echoed these comments and indicated that the program can even last beyond the offender's prison sentence. This staff member indicated, "Those guys love the program. We've actually had a couple of guys discharge and their family had adopted the dog so they still had the dog when they got out."

Wheels for the World is another humanitarian based program that is available to offenders at one medium security prison in Oklahoma. Wheels for the World is a voluntary prison based program that works to supply wheelchairs to disabled people around the world. The humanitarian based correctional program is available in nine prisons throughout seven states, including one facility in Oklahoma. Wheels for the World trains inmates to restore a broken or non-functioning wheelchair and restore it to like-new condition. In this program inmates learn to work together, perfect basic mechanical skills and produce a product that will be sent to help someone who is not able to afford a wheelchair on their own.

One of the staff members associated with this program at the Oklahoma location indicated that there has been a great response from the inmate population. This person indicated they felt like the inmates saw participating in this program as way that they are able to give back to a society that they had previously wronged.

It kind of serves as a form of restitution for some of them. It helps them have a sense of purpose and a feeling of being needed as well. It helps them feel like they are contributing to something and not just sitting idle while they are locked up. I've had a lot of guys talk about how they feel like they are really working toward something that can really benefit people and not just fill up the day. Additionally, they know that what they are doing goes to someone who needs help.

### Faith Based Correctional Programming

In addition to the humanitarian work based programming, faith based programming is available at several institutions. Faith based programs and faith-based institutions potentially offer a wealth of resources and services for the communities in which they reside and the facilities that they service. Research indicates that faith based programs have been successful in reaching many offenders and meeting their unique social, educational, and employment needs once released. However, there is little documentation of how extensive these services are, their effectiveness, and whether they have the capacity to meet the needs of reintegrating prisoners and their families (McRoberts 2002). Bill Glass, founder of Champions of Life, a popular prison faith based program used here in Oklahoma, discounts this finding and indicates that the importance of including a spiritual component in programs to prepare offenders for successful re-entry.

The need to educate inmates is well-documented. Educational programs are good - they're necessary. But education alone isn't the answer to reducing the rate of re-incarceration, which now looms at nearly 70 percent nationally. Faith-based programs

address core issues of behavior, and often produce a change of heart that can propel inmates into a productive, law-abiding life after prison. High quality education, life skills and religious programs, working together, can increase an offender's chances for success following their release by providing them with stronger values, purpose and direction (Glass 2003).

Faith based programming is becoming more and more utilized within the correctional setting. Many states have incorporated faith based programming into their correctional setting as one method to reach offenders and prepare them for life without crime once they are released from prison. In 2003 the nation's largest private correctional company committed to incorporated faith based programs into all of its institutions within three years. When questioned about the use of faith based programs in the correctional setting, one of their lead administrators indicated,

If we neglect the spiritual component of rehabilitation, we do a tremendous disservice to the individuals in our care. Our primary goal is to ensure the safety of our staff, inmates and the public, and be a positive presence in the communities we serve. We strive to provide not only a safe and secure environment but also meaningful opportunities for inmates to prepare for a successful transition back to society. Faith-based programming strongly supports these goals (Seaton 2003).

Kairos Prison Ministry International, Inc. is another form of faith based programming within the correctional setting. Kairos offers ministries that addressing the spiritual needs of incarcerated men, women and children, to their families and to those who work in the prison environment. Kairos is a Christian, lay-led, ecumenical, volunteer international prison ministry consisting of three programs: the Men's and Women's Ministry, Kairos Outside, and Kairos Torch. Kairos programs are available to offenders incarcerated in Oklahoma. Kairos programs are used as weekend programs where offenders take part of the program for three days or as well as in house community programs where offenders take the program on the housing unit in which they live.

Research has indicated that the program has been successful in helping keep inmates from returning to crime once released. In a study of 505 inmates released from Florida prisons, the recidivism rate was 15.7% among those who had participated in one Kairos session, and 10% among those who had participated in two or more Kairos sessions. The non-Kairos control group in the study had a recidivism rate of 23.4% (<http://www.kairosprisonministry.org>). Correctional staff members that have a full-time Kairos program at their facility indicate that it has been successful for participants:

The program teaches several classes. Some of them are MRT and do some job training where they can go to the computer lab and get some basic computer skills. They also have an evening where a volunteer can come in and just visit with him. It's kind of like if they had their family come in and visit with them. They get to sit and talk and just work through some things.

#### The Importance of Education in Correctional Programming

There is little doubt of role of education in correctional programming. The Bureau of Justice Statistics indicates the more than 40 percent of the nations inmates have not completed high school or obtained their GED (Harlow 2003). This statistic becomes more shocking when it is compared to 18 percent of the general population that had not finished the 12th grade. Between 1991 and 1997, the percent of inmates in state prison without a high school diploma or GED remained the same — 40% in 1997 and 41% in 1991. Of inmates in State prisons, 293,000 in 1991 and 420,600 in 1997 had entered prison without a high school diploma, a 44% increase (Harlow 2003).

One staff member interviewed for this research indicated similar findings at their institution and even went as far to make a direct connection between the lack of education and criminal activity:

It has been my experience that a majority of offenders coming in are lacking education or any skills. From what I've seen that's probably the things that have led them to do the things they do to come to prison. They are out there without any education, without any skills, all they know is the criminal way to do things.

As indicated in previous chapters, offering offenders educational opportunities is essential in preparing an offender for successful release and a life free from crime once released. Research has indicated when inmates participate in educational opportunities while incarcerated they are less likely to commit new crimes once released (Flannigan 1994 and Fabelo 2000). Additionally, a 1995 study evaluating the recidivism rate of inmates that completed educational programs Harer (1995) showed a 39 percent recidivism rate for participants of educational programs and 46 percent recidivism for non-participants.

The most effective programs are those aimed at released prisoners in the mid-twenties or older as these individuals may be more motivated to change their lifestyles than their younger counterparts. Results from the largest and most comprehensive correctional education and recidivism study to date show lower rates of recidivism among inmates who participated in these programs (Steurer 2001). In this study examining the recidivism rates of over 3,000 prisoners in three states the recidivism rate was 29 percent lower among education program participants than among nonparticipants of educational programs. In addition, the study found that individuals who participated in prison education programs earned higher wages upon release than offenders who did not participate in educational program opportunities while incarcerated. There is also evidence that involvement in job training and placement programs can lead to employment and lower recidivism (Wilson 2004). Recidivism rates of participants in prison education, vocation, and work programs have been found to be 20 to 60



percent lower than those of nonparticipants. Additionally, participants in work programs are more likely to be employed following release and have higher earnings than nonparticipants (Steurer 2001).

With these statistics, the role of correctional programming does not go unnoticed at the administrative level or in the individual institutions. Every person interviewed for this research indicated that education programs were extremely valuable in helping an inmate prepare for life once released. Most staff members working directly with inmates in the institutions talked about the importance of inmates taking part in educational programs offered at the facilities. However, despite the overall feeling that education programs are essential for preparing the inmate for release and offering a real chance to live crime free once released, many staff members brought up the relevance of some of the courses offered to inmates and questioned the intent of the programming. At nearly all institutions contacted for this research at least one participant indicated they felt like there weren't enough options available for inmates who were genuinely interested in obtaining a job skill that would allow them to work and to provide a livable income for the inmate or his or her family. One staff members insisted:

It's real hard to offer a vo-tech program. We have three of them here...but an inmate really has no choice. If we don't tailor those vo-tech programs to the inmate's interest or get them to a one that they are interested in. And, it's real hard to get lateral transfers. Then we really aren't helping the inmate if we are giving him something that he has no interest in. If you teach an inmate how to weave baskets and he doesn't like to weave baskets then you've wasted your money and his time.

Another staff member at a different correctional facility expressed similar dissatisfaction with the current system utilized by the Department of Corrections and questioned the restriction on an offender not being able to transfer to another medium

security correctional facility to work on a vocational need that they actually have an interest in rather than choosing a program from what is being offered at their current facility.

Under DOC's protocol now it's very difficult to get to a facility with a particular program, say like a vo-tech that you are interested in taking. Before you could apply to a vo-tech and when your name came up next on the waiting list you could get a lateral packet and move to that facility to take the program. That's no longer the case because if it's on your case plan then you are automatically assigned to it and you just need to take a vo-tech at the facility you are at. With the increased inmate population there's just not a lot of room for lateral transfers and really there's just not really any medium bed space anywhere. So, you've just got to hope that the yard you're on has something that you can take.

These respondents were not alone in their concerns about the availability of vocational programs and whether or not the inmate has any real interest in the skill they are learning.

Another person that works directly with inmates indicated similar challenges with the current vocational opportunities for offenders:

I do think that we can do programs differently and do them better. I think that the vo-tech's that we have are good, but they are not necessarily something that someone who is going to have to check that they are a convicted felon on a job application are ever going to be able to get a job doing. I think that there are a lot of things that we could offer that would help them once they get out, where the conviction doesn't matter as much. There is diesel mechanics or something like that where it doesn't matter so much. It's not like they are going to be left alone with opportunities like, say a commercial cleaning course.

This individual went on to question if the current system actually sets people up for rejection in the job market based on the vocational courses they are offered while incarcerated at some institutions. This person asked, "Would you want to hire someone to come in and clean your office building knowing that they have done time for theft – or worse? I don't necessarily think that we offer choices that will lead to them getting a job."

However, this was not the case at all of the institutions contacted. One staff member had a different view on the applicability of programs offered at their facility. This particular

person expressed sentiments that offenders who take part in the vocational programs at their institution were able to obtain jobs in their newly acquired job skill area. This participant stated:

I think they will be able to get jobs once they get out. The instructors that are down there really put a lot of work into getting these guys help when they know they are close to discharge. They will frequently call someone they know in the business or they will call someone that they know will be able to help this guy get a job once he is released. We do kind of do some things that are above and beyond the regular job requirements per say that some of the other institutions just won't get involved in. I think that our vocational programs may offer more help than what some of the other facilities do for their participants.

Other problems were brought up involving education programs in the correctional setting. The most prominent problem was the lack of available programs for offenders and the lengthy of time that inmates wait to get into educational programs. Research indicates that just over half of all state prisoners participate in educational programs at some point during their incarceration, and a proportion of that has been decreasing over time (Harlow 2003). While all federal prisons, 91 percent of state prisons, 88 percent of private prisons, and 60 percent of jails offer some type of educational program, the relatively low number of available program slots often limits rates of program participation. Frequently the demand for programming often exceeds supply, resulting in waiting lists for many programs (La Vigne et al 2003).

Similar findings were present in the facilities contacted for this research. One person working at the facility level indicated that the waiting list varied based on the type of educational program an offender was trying to get into, but that there always was a waiting list for any type of program:

The waiting list depends on which level of education you are trying to get into. If you are almost ready to get your GED you will have to wait a while. However, if you

have a TABE score of 6 or less an inmate can get into those classes fairly rapidly. If you have a vo-tech need, that waiting list is often 6 months to a year. The program is that long and it's always full.

Another staff member talked about having to juggle classroom time and having to extend classroom hours made possible by utilizing volunteers. According to this staff member limited time and space for classrooms has severely limited the amount of correctional programming that is readily available to offenders. The lack of adequate space was a reported issue at all correctional centers participating in this research.

#### Drug Treatment: Treating More than Just the Drug Habit

Another critical program offered to inmates while incarcerated is the drug and alcohol treatment programs. There are a variety of options for corrections-based substance abuse treatment, although they do not all provide the same results. All of Oklahoma's substance abuse treatment programs are cognitive based and address the thought patterns associated with substance abuse as well as the addiction. Research shows that treatment programs that are most effective for people involved in the criminal justice system employ a therapeutic emphasis on helping the person to change his or her behavior, include multiple levels of care, and use the leverage of the criminal justice program to retain him or her in treatment (Andrews 2003). Corrections administrators are more frequently turning to the establishment therapeutic communities to treat offenders with substance abuse problems. Therapeutic Communities are highly structured units of residential treatment where participants live (usually) for a year or longer. Therapeutic Communities offer the advantage of comprehensive, integrated treatment, ease of transfer to similar community-based programs, and frequently the involvement of community- and faith-based services.

All Oklahoma Department of Corrections treatment programs are referred to as Substance Abuse Treatment Programs, or SAT's. All of the state's drug and alcohol treatment programs encompass the Regimented Treatment Programs and the Therapeutic Communities. Additionally, all treatment programs rely on cognitive behavioral theory to address substance abuse not as a disease, but as a behavior that can be addressed with proper treatment.

Most staff members who were contacted for this study talked about the importance of using a cognitive based approach to treat the offender. One staff member who works directly with the Therapeutic Community at their facility indicated the following:

The drug and alcohol program addresses not only the discipline to make it in life, but it also addresses the criminal thinking and the substance abuse patterns that come along with that. I will say this, unless you really address the criminal thinking, you can educate these guys, teach them work ethics, but if you don't do anything to address the belief system that supports criminal lifestyle then everything do out there...that learning can be incorporated into a criminal lifestyle. This will only make the criminal more adept at getting around in society and developing a lifestyle that focuses on crime.

Others the importance of changing thinking patterns as well as the actual substance abuse issue and indicated:

When you address the substance abuse issues that are often closely tied to criminal thinking a can experience change. Now, a person can use that treatment or program for whatever means, maybe even wrong motives, maybe to get out of prison quicker or something like that, cannot go through treatment for that length of time without something, without you being affected on some level.

It is a known fact that a person can go through a treatment program for the wrong reasons, but the treatment can lay dormant and then later on kick in years later when that person decides to change their life. Then they will have the tools to do that – at least they will have been exposed to it.

## Are They Really Thinking For a Change?

Research had indicated that some individuals who are incarcerated may have cognitive deficits commonly linked to criminal thinking and behavior including pro-criminal attitudes; pro-criminal associates; impulsivity; weak socialization; below-average verbal intelligence; a taste for risk; weak problem-solving or self-control skills; the early onset of antisocial behavior; poor parental practices; and deficits in educational, vocational, and employment skills (Gaes 1999). In addition to the social and psychological deficits individuals may bring with them to correctional facilities, some inmates may develop coping mechanisms that are suited to their current environment but may be unhealthy when they re-enter society (Haney 2002). In addition, prison diminishes the life management and daily decision-making skills needed for independent living. Improvement in such individuals' cognitive skills, behavioral patterns, and personal confidence may lead to better outcomes, including reduced criminal involvement and fewer victims, once they return home (Lipsey 2003).

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections offers courses that are specifically designed to address the thinking patterns that many offenders have. It is suggested that if the thought pattern of the inmate can change, then the actions of the inmate can change. By participating in cognitive behavioral programs, it is the goal that once released offenders will think before they act and make decisions that will not lead them to a life of crime. However, several staff members who were interviewed for this research indicated they aren't convinced that inmates are receptive to this program:

I just finished a class where a guy who completed it told me that I could sit there and preach this all I wanted, but that in his world it doesn't really matter. In the inmate's

mind it's frequently that he's got certain needs that he's got to meet. If that means that he can sell drugs for 2000 a day and take the chance that he won't get caught that's a risk he's willing to take. I just don't know if we are ever going to be able to fix the inmate mentality. Unless you get caught with trafficking then drug charges aren't that big of a deal. You can do a two year sentence in about 6 to 9 months and then be back out.

One staff member questioned the effectiveness of a short-term program that is designed to "reprogram" a lifetime of correctional thinking and behavior.

How do you combat criminal thinking with a program that is a one hour program one night a week for 22 weeks? I mean you talk about making bad choices and you try to tell them and show them that there are better choices, but when you send someone out with if they are lucky a GED or a vo-tech that they can't get a job with then what do you expect. They can get out and work at Mc Donald's for very little money or they can get out and sell drugs and make a lot of money for very little work, which do you think most are going to do? I just don't think that we offer a program that will fix that.

### The Varying Views on PROTECT

The Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative (SVORI) was developed in 2003 by the U. S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs and other federal partners to assist with the crisis of younger high-risk offenders returning to the community. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections received funding from this federal grant and created a multi-agency program entitled Partnership for Reintegration of Offenders through Employment and Community Treatment (PROTECT). This program targets youthful serious and violent offenders re-entering the community. To be eligible for PROTECT, an offender must be 18 to 35 years old, have been incarcerated for at least one year, score 29 or above on the LSI-R (indicating a high need for treatment) or be a convicted sex offender, and must be returning to Oklahoma County, Oklahoma.

The PROTECT program focuses on the treatment needs of each offender being released and utilizes a coordinated reentry plan developed and implemented by a team composed of corrections and community-based transition staff. The focal point for community services is with the local Workforce Oklahoma offices and the Oklahoma City Weed and Seed Office. PROTECT focuses on improved assessment, information sharing, and outreach to the community during the incarceration stage. These efforts are combined with other forms of community outreach in correctional facilities during the period immediately before an inmate's return to the community. These efforts are accomplished by an expanded force of PROTECT transition workers who work with offenders and coordinate a variety of available services to help address the needs of the targeted offenders returning to Oklahoma County.

Through the course of this research many correctional staff members were familiar with PROTECT and reported that they had seen offenders meet the criteria and actually participate in the federal grant. However, many correctional workers at the facility level report mixed reactions to the program from the inmate population:

Several inmates were eligible, but they didn't want to take part in the program because they felt like it would be another method of control over their lives. The trade off for what they would get wasn't going to be worth what they would give up as far as being required to report, being required to do whatever their transition worker wanted.

Most of the inmates that I've tried to get interested in PROTECT feel like it's having a parole officer once they get out. They don't want to have someone that report to or someone they check into or someone checking up on them. I think most of them feel like that's what that program is – an extension of prison.



There also were several staff members that indicated that they had offenders who were interested in the types of social support services that PROTECT offered, but they simply did not meet the criteria for the program:

I've had two people want to take part in the program. I've offered it to a lot more than that, but only two really be interested. A lot of inmates want to take part in the program, but a lot of them don't want to go to Oklahoma County. They might have family or friends living elsewhere and they really have no desire to go to the City area. This is especially if they came from Tulsa or wherever. Even with the kind of support offered, they aren't willing to make the move to Oklahoma County. However, many have said that they wished they had similar services throughout the state.

Another staff member indicated they had a greater response to the acceptance of the PROTECT, however, they still had a limited number of inmates who actually met the criteria for participation.

We've had about 12 in the last couple of years – maybe one every couple of months. We didn't have as many even eligible as what you would think. Due to the constraints of the program with the age limit and the LSI-R score we really didn't have that many that could take part in the program if they wanted to. Those really restricted many of our inmates. I would say that at least half of those that wanted to go couldn't because of the restrictions.

### Preparing for the Returning Role in the Family

Additionally, there are several programs that were offered at the correctional facilities on a very limited basis. An example of this is the marriage and family counseling programs reportedly offered at many correctional facilities. In many instances, this program is only offered at a specific time that coincides with set times during the year that offenders who are incarcerated can obtain legal marriages. One particular counseling program works with inmates and their soon-to-be spouses about expectations associated with obtaining a marriage while one spouse is incarcerated. This research did not find any facilities that offered

family/marital counseling offered any type of counseling to inmates and families preparing for a loved one to return back to the family unit.

### Measuring Successful Outcomes

Virtually no correctional staff members were familiar with outcome measures associated with inmates' participating in programs throughout their incarceration. One staff member who works directly with inmate programming at the facility level indicated that the program they are responsible for tracked the misconduct reports and the number of facility grievance reports of its participants, graduates and those terminated from the program. This person went on to report the findings from 2005:

I will say this, I just crunched some numbers for last year and we had 10 grievances for the year as opposed to the other units that averaged out at about 22 grievances for the year. So, overall, this unit was a little bit under 50 percent of the average. That shows a lot of staff interaction with inmates and their willingness to help inmates and work with them to lessen their issues such as misconduct reports where we had a lower number of misconducts.

Additionally, program staff working directly with inmates questioned the Department of Correction's definition of recidivism in association with outcome measures for program success:

Of course, one of the best outcome measures would be to track those guys and see if they recidivate. In Oklahoma the definition of recidivism is if they come back within three years. This is opposed to another entity such as the BOP where their definition of recidivism is if they ever come back in their lifetime. So, it pretty much depends on whose definition of recidivism that you are using. That changes how you are going to color your outcome measures. That is the ideal thing for Oklahoma though – to track them to see if they come back within three years.

## CHAPTER VI

### REHABILITATION AND REALITY: STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE PROCESS OF RE-ENTRY

This chapter seeks to identify if there is a gap in the described goals of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections to prepare an inmate for release and what occurs in at the institutional level to prepare an inmate for life after incarceration. Staff members who work directly with inmates were asked about several categories of questions regarding the types of correctional programming offered for offenders to prepare them for release. These questions identified the release process of an inmate, the role of case management, staff perceptions of inmate programs and changes that staff members working directly with offenders would recommend to make correctional programming more effective for inmates preparing for release. Additionally, questions were asked to determine if the described goals of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections were being applied in the institutions.

#### Transitional Services

Currently there are four facilities that have transition coordinators available to inmates: Oklahoma State Reformatory, Dick Connor Correctional Center, Jess Dunn and Eddie Warrior Correctional Center (only from the Taft Unit) and William S. Key Correctional Center. These facilities were selected based on the number of high risk offenders that release from the Department of Corrections at medium security facilities. Transition coordinators are assigned to work with high risk offenders at select facilities run by the Department of Corrections. Only offenders housed at these facilities are eligible for participation in this track.

Offenders may be referred to transition coordinators after the unit manager meets with the inmate to discuss personal re-entry plans for an upcoming release. If an offender does not meet criteria for community corrections or PROTECT they could be referred to meet with a transition coordinator. Inmates eligible for this re-entry track must be incarcerated for at least one year, have a high or moderate LSI-R score (a score of 19) or have been incarcerated for more than 10 years. The offender must also have a favorable recommendation from the parole board to be paroled to the street. If an offender is within six months of his projected release date they may also be eligible for this re-entry track.

However, when speaking to staff members who either work as Transition Coordinators or work closely with these specialized staff members, there were several comments regarding the inability to target a large number of offenders who meet the criteria for transitional services offered at a medium security facility. One staff member stated,

It looks good on paper that we offer these services to inmates preparing for release, but the number of inmates that we actually target is very limited. I have a hard time finding people who fit the criteria. I work with the guys that I can, but I'm really limited in what I can do.

### The Role of Case Managers in the Re-entry Process

When an offender is approximately six months from their anticipated release date, the case manager is the person responsible for meeting with the inmate and developing an individual pre-release plan. The pre-release plan will focus on the offender's basic needs to create a successful transition from incarceration. Additionally, the case manager is required to hold an interview with the inmate and review the Pre-Release Checklist with the offender. The Pre-Release Checklist includes verifying information regarding the offender's

identification, the proposed residence once released and transportation on the day of discharge.

Most people interviewed for this research indicated that the role of the case manager is essential in preparing the offender for release. Almost all who worked in the institutions indicated they thought the case manager's role was the single most important person in the correctional setting to provide the offender with information that can help them during the first few months of release. One respondent describes the role of the case manager as, "the first line of defense when it comes to helping an inmate get ready for release. They help them to get the information they need to help them get out and stay out." Others who took part in this research expressed similar thoughts regarding the new and emerging role of the case manager in the release process.

The case manager's role as far as the re-entry process has really been increased. The case manager is responsible for getting the inmate prepared to go back to society as far as trying to find them assistance, to help them get their identification, and the other things they need to be able to get a job and to get housing. They are really stepping up the role of the case manager in helping the inmate get those things and preparing them to return to society.

Many staff members who work at the institutional level indicated that the Department of Corrections has really taken efforts to be sure that certain issues are being addressed with the offender prior to release. This, according to several who work with inmates preparing for release gives guidelines for a case manager on what they should be talking to the inmate about. However, despite the increased preparation for the offender by correctional staff members, many expressed that there were still problems associated with this new process. One staff member indicated it is a good idea to have staff members at the facility level to

work with offenders who are getting ready for release, but there needed to be additional staff members that are responsible for only the release process.

Case managers really need to be talking to their inmates and finding out what they are going to be doing. With the current set up, however, case management still isn't in its best form. Right now they hardly have time to work on the offender's case. The case manager needs to be able to work on the re-entry stuff, the 120 day reviews, the chronos and the classification and be able to be very familiar with that inmate. Right now they are working a lot on property and visitation that keeps them busy.

One staff member made reference to the development of the transitional case workers at select facilities and indicated that would be the ideal situation for all facilities. This person indicated that if each facility had a transition worker there could be better information available and more outreach to be certain that the offender is getting mentally ready for the release process.

It would be great if we were like the other facilities that got the transition workers. They've got specific training to look at what is really out there for inmates once they get out. Right now, if I need to refer an inmate to someplace for housing, a job, or something like that all I have is the internet. Now, you tell me how helpful that really is for an inmate. I don't know how much what I have time to give them really matters. If there was someone to work with everyone who's getting out on a one-on-one basis I think this whole thing could work. Right now, there's just not time for me to sit and come up with a real plan for someone getting ready to get out of prison. They're still on their own.

A second staff member at another facility indicated similar thoughts and made reference to the amount of time that a case manager has to work with an inmate to prepare for release. This person indicated that there are several competing demands on the case managers and just not enough time to work on the actual case aspect of the position. This person also indicated it was difficult to spend time with an offender preparing for release because some inmates frequently does not see this time as valuable for their release.

Inmates take very little advice to what the case manager's are giving them. Most of them are just in the reviews for their level and that's about it. The time that is actually spent working with an inmate really varies. You do have offender's who really want help. They would actually like to know where they could go to get a job. Those guys will come and of course you spend more time trying to get them the best information. Then you have the guys that think they are going to go out and it's going to be absolutely perfect for them – it's not going to matter that they have this past. Those guys aren't interested in anything that you have to say to them. When you talk to these guy's it's like you are preaching to them. They'll be, "yea, yea, yea, just let me go."

#### "The Ideal Release Process or the Actual One?"

The Department of Corrections has recently instituted numerous forms to assist the case manager, unit manager, and other areas of the facility that are instrumental in ensuring an offender has the information they need prior to the completion of their sentence. Almost everyone that participated in this research was familiar with the release process. Some staff members at the facility level were only familiar with their role in the process, but were aware that there have been changes in what happens with an offender on their last day in custody. There were very few staff members who were totally unfamiliar with the current process. One staff member whose role in the institution is considered a central part of the release procedure was unaware of many of the changes of this process and indicated at their facility it was still common practice to, "They just are given some money. They go check all of their stuff through the facility. They get cleared. Then their family comes to get them. If they don't have that, then we just take them to the bus station and that's it."

The Department of Corrections operating procedures indicated that at six months from the offenders anticipated release date the case manager will meet with an offender and work to create an individual pre-release plan that will focus on the offender's basic needs to

create a successful transition from incarceration. The case manager is required to hold an interview with the inmate and review the Pre-Release Checklist with the offender. The Pre-Release Checklist includes verifying information regarding the offender's identification, the proposed residence once released and transportation on the day of discharge. The checklist also identifies if the offender has children and the social situation with the mother(s) to better prepare the inmate for a return to a family life that was left behind while incarcerated. Additionally, the checklist summarizes any financial responsibilities the offender may have either to the court system in court costs and court fees or any outstanding victim compensation fees. The case plan will also cover other essential information for the offender to include any medical treatment needed, legal obligations and sex offender registration if required. This checklist also identifies any type of aftercare referrals for medical treatment, mental health treatment or substance abuse treatment.

When talking to individuals at the institutional level regarding the actual release process for offenders at each facility level, the adherence to this process varied considerably from one medium security prison to another. Several staff members indicated that it was difficult to get inmates to assist in certain areas of the release process. Many referred to the requirement for an offender to have two forms of identification at the facility prior to discharge. Oklahoma Department of Corrections operating procedures indicates that an inmate will have their social security card and their birth certificate as a part of the re-entry process. Many staff members who work directly with inmates indicated this was difficult to accomplish both with the inmates and the government. In terms of working with inmates for this process to be complete, many staff members indicated that inmates were hesitant about applying for either of these forms of identification. One staff member indicated they had



given out social security card applications to more than 240 inmates under their supervision and got less than 40 completed applications returned.

I don't know what the problem was with this. I can understand why inmates don't apply for their birth certificate while they are incarcerated. It costs more than \$10 and to you and I that's not a lot of money for something, but for an inmate who has maybe \$8 a month, that's a lot of money. So we really don't push for that to happen. But I don't know what the problem was with the social security card applications. Our facility indicated they would pay for all of the applications to be sent if the inmates would just complete the applications, but we couldn't even get them to do that. In the end, I think it came down to them thinking that they simply weren't going to get it back when they were released.

Another staff member indicated they had similar problems at their facility with this same issue:

We have problems with that because many times inmates have ID, but don't want to send it in because they think they won't get it back. We've also had some problems getting IDs due to many applications needing photo IDs with the application. We try to get them their birth certificate and social security card before they leave here.

One facility however tried a different approach to expressing the value and importance of having a form of identification upon release. The person contacted at this facility indicated they had better results by creating a separate file for the offender that they would get on the day of release that contained various legal information as well as any program certificates and completions that could help them get a job once released. This person indicated:

What we've determined to work here is to start them with a re-entry portfolio at 180 days out. That way whenever anything comes in for them it is put in that portfolio and kept in their legal file for when they leave. Some of the things that we keep in there is their identification, their court costs and any certificates of program completion. That information is really there for them to have when they walk out the gate. How I had to start explaining it to my inmates was like this: Do you realize that if you don't have this stuff when you leave that it takes 6 to 8 weeks to get an identification card and no one is going to hire you without an ID. A lot of them don't think about it that way. Finally they realize that I'm right and that it will really benefit them.

### There's Always Room for Change

The final question asked to staff members who participated in this research was regarding what respondents would change about the current reentry process through the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. This question offered the most variety and the most in depth answers from all respondents of this research. Many people who participated in this study touched on offender responsibility throughout the release process and several other staff members brought up what they perceived inmate's responses to correctional programming.

One person brought up the reward portion of correctional programming that offers an offender -1 point from their custody assessment classification instrument that determines the level of security they will serve their prison sentence and whether or not that incentive alone is what drives offenders into correctional programming. This person went on to indicate:

It depends on who you are dealing with. I think that it is a good idea to give the -1, but if they are going to do it for the right reasons they will want to do it for the program, not the -1 and the days. I think that is just kind of the extra reason for them to do it. Maybe at first they really weren't going to do it and then they find out it gives days and -1 point then maybe they'll do it. I think it's often a reason for them to do it, now it's not a sound one.

Someone else indicated they thought many offenders took part in correctional programming for the reward the -1 point from their classification and indicated:

There's really not anything that the department of the individual facilities can do to change the way inmates think about getting into the programs. I think that is the incentive that drives a lot of people. However, it's kind of like church though, no matter what got them there you have to believe that some of it will sink in. If it is just the days and the points that gets them there, then it's whatever it takes.

Another person went on to say they had experienced similar mixed rationale for offenders participating in the drug treatment program offered at their facility:

The vast majority of the treatment that comes out of the drug treatment program is the 70 days and -1 point for completion. This is not to say that it's not a good program, but the inmates go through the program with the mindset of it looks good for the parole board, it will give me good days and it may help me go to lower security or get my sentence modified. That's just the inmate mentality that some of them have – it's what can I get out of this, not going in and actually working the program for the value of the treatment.

Other staff members indicated they would vary the programs offered to offenders to better prepare them for life once they are released from prison and that the current educational system can only do so much:

I would increase the availability of inmate programs. I would work first to expand the GED and Vocational programs that are offered. I think we are missing a lot with that – we simply don't have enough educational programs for offenders. The programs are reflective of the current job market, plus they are within the training ability of the facilities. There are a number of things that you can't train people for in this environment.

Another person went on to indicate they wished their facility offered a class on daily living skills and commented on how for many people the fundamentals of making it day-to-day are not being addressed in correctional programming:

I would change what we offer. I do think that we need to offer basic living skills – whether it's for days and a -1 or not, we need to give them a life skills class. I think getting into programs needs to be easier. We have a lot of guys that come into the system with short sentences now and they may never get the opportunity to get into some programs simply because of the time they have to serve and the classes being full.

Others who expressed similar desires for more educational opportunities for inmates talked about their current practice and how they would alter it to allow more inmates to participate in correctional programming on a daily basis:

An inmate spends about 6 hours each day. Right now we are looking at the academic classes at reducing that to 3 hours each day and having twice as many students in classes. Six hours is an awful long time to sit in a classroom setting. Adult learning theory just does not support a 6 hour classroom time for learning. We do not have this problem with vocational courses because by their very nature they are much more active and doing things throughout the day.

Several people discussed the role of correctional educators and their willingness to explore other options as a means to incorporate more offenders into the educational setting.

One facility indicated they were attempting to take one of their humanitarian based programs and expand it into a vocational course by adding certifications and additional hands on experiences.

Additionally, several staff members indicated they would like to see more outside agencies working with the Department of Corrections to help inmates once they are release from prison. One staff member went on to say:

Even if there was an inmate's Workforce Oklahoma, or something similar to that where an inmate could go and find places that actually hire former inmates. A lot of places, once you check that box indicating you have a felony conviction they really are no longer interested in you working for them. If there was a place that they could go that could give them a list of people who are willing to give them a chance. I am sure that it has to be frustrating to get out and you go to 12 interviews and no one is interested in hiring you because you have a felony conviction. I can see how they could get mad and think, who cares and why try anymore because no one is going to hire me anyway. If there were services that could direct them once they are out. I mean, a case manager and correctional staff can let them know where they can go to try to get a job or what clinic will see you if you have a mental health level of C2, but it would be nice if there was someplace that would tell you that you could go to X to get your psychotropic meds or go to Y because this guy has hired ex-offenders in the past. It's a difficult place to be in, I am sure. Once they've done their time it should be over for them.

There were several staff members that indicated they would like to see more areas of the institution get involved in correctional programming as well as the release process so that it has more of an impact on the offender.

We need more staff to look at the inmate as a whole person. We need to look at all of the needs that he has. One thing I like about our drug treatment unit is that they have educational opportunities over there on the unit. The counselors don't see just the drug or alcohol need that should be addressed, they see the educational need as well. About 50 percent of our GEDs come from that unit. Our treatment staff are great about seeing all of the roles this inmate has. He has his treatment needs, but he also has his educational needs and he has a family that needs social issues worked out.

One person indicated they thought the Department of Corrections was doing plenty to assist inmates in their transition from incarceration back into society. They indicated they thought the correctional staff members were fulfilling their obligation to prepare the inmate by giving them the information to be successful and it was up to the individual inmate to determine how to use it.

There's nothing else that DOC can do. What they do is they give the offender the information. The Department of Corrections can't do some things for them once they are released – they can't house them, they can't give them a job, they can't take care of them. So really all they can do is give them the information.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary of Findings

This research is the result of semi-structured interviews with twenty-one staff members who either work for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Program Administration Unit or directly with inmates incarcerated at a medium security facility under the supervision of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. This study identified the importance of inmate programming in preparing for resocialization once released from prison. Additionally, this study looked to determine if there was a gap between the Department's efforts to prepare inmates for release and what program staff members at state and contract facilities indicate is being done at the facility level to actually prepare inmates for release.

The findings from this study suggest that organizations, like individuals, engage in impression management. In this instance, the idea of programming and rehabilitation are used to foster the impression that correctional institutions are "treating" the offenders and preparing them for life once released. The programs actually being offered in the correctional facility versus the programs that the Oklahoma Department of Corrections indicates are available to offenders vary considerably according to staff members at the facility level. As one respondent indicated when asked about particular program reportedly offered at their correctional facility, "I can't tell you how long it's been since we've had a couple of those. I've been at this facility for several years and some of them haven't been offered during that whole time."

Overall, this research found there are considerable differences between the goal of effective re-entry process that the Oklahoma Department of Corrections desires to have and what actually occurs on a daily basis. This gap exists from the entry into the correctional system and continues all of the way to the release process. Programs are not offered in accordance to departmental information and quite often the release process does not start at the point of entry as many of the Program Administration Unit staff members indicated. Instead, at the facility level, many times the release preparation started weeks prior to release and included merely “completing the form.” Based upon the sixteen interviews with correctional staff at the facility level, this current release process does not assist the offender in preparing for a successful life after incarceration.

#### Limitations of the Study

Despite the information found through this study, there are several limitations to this research process. This study involved interviewing twenty-one participants regarding inmate programmatic opportunities at medium security prisons in Oklahoma. This is a very small representation of the number of staff members who work directly with offenders to prepare them for release. An additional limitation of this study is that there are more than 24,000 inmates incarcerated in the Oklahoma prison system. This research provides only a snapshot of 5,431 inmates incarcerated within eleven medium security correctional facilities. Furthermore, this study only examines the release process for inmates at medium security. The ideal release situation occurs at lower security correctional institutions where offenders are offered the opportunity to participate in work programs, substance abuse aftercare

programs, further their education. At community corrections inmates are given more responsibility and privileges to better prepare them for life after release.

### Contributions to the Discipline

It has become necessary to re-examine the current prison culture and try to expand ways for offenders to abandon the prison socialization process and reaccept the norms and values of the larger society as they prepare for release from incarceration. This research provides only one piece of the puzzle on the preparations available for offenders facing release – how participation in correctional programming can help prepare offenders for release and serve as a way to keep offender connected to the larger society.

Conceptually, this study provided information that gives credence to prisonization within the correctional environment. Responses from staff members who work directly with offenders offer a glimpse of the “inmate mentality” that occurs with incarceration. Many staff members described responses they receive from offenders when assisting them in their preparation for release. Zingraff (1975) theorized that once an offender assimilated fully into the prison subculture it would become more and more difficult to become resocialized and later accept the goals of society. Correctional programming opportunities may be viewed as one method to keep an offender connected to the goals and objectives of the formal organization or society. Travis (2000) indicates changes in thought patterns must occur at the beginning of the inmate’s sentence and continue throughout incarceration. However, many staff members indicated this was not the case within the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.



## Implications for Future Research

The primary implication is for the re-evaluation of the current release process and correctional programming opportunities available for offenders in Oklahoma. Whereas this study examined the release process through the eyes of correctional staff members and Program Administration staff members, future research could examine how inmates perceive the release process. It would be informative to ask the same set of questions from this research guide to offenders who are preparing for release. There is a great possibility that the intended recipients of these pre-release efforts see the labor in a completely different manner. If it would be possible to base correctional programming upon real world experiences rather than statistical analysis, there could be the chance that the results would be different.

A second implication for future study as a result of this study could be to examine the programmatic opportunities available to offenders housed at state facilities versus those housed at contract facilities. Through the course of this research the researcher found that many contract facilities offered correctional programs to offenders, but many programs were not “approved” programs by the Department of Corrections, thus offenders completing these programs are not eligible for program completion rewards on their Custody Assessment Scale. Many research participants indicated they believed the receipt of -1 point on offender classification was a primary objective for many offenders participating in programs. Additional research is needed in this area to examine if an inmate has more program opportunities if they are housed at a particular facility. The Department of Corrections indicates inmate housing is random based risk assessment, however, if an offender has more opportunities for successful re-entry at a state or contract facility, further research could determine if the system is better preparing some offender for success once released.

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## APPENDIX



APPENDIX A  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW APPROVAL

## Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Wednesday, December 07, 2005  
IRB Application No AS0643  
Proposal Title: A Second Chance in Oklahoma? A Review of National Re-Entry Trends and Oklahoma's Efforts to Prepare its inmates for Life After Incarceration  
Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

**Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 12/6/2006**

Principal Investigator(s)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Cara Adney<br>745 East Oak Street<br>Cushing, OK 74023 | Gary Webb<br>006 Classroom<br>Stillwater, OK 74078 |
|--|--|

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The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacobs, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B  
CONSENT FORM

## CONSENT FORM

Project Title:

A SECOND CHANCE IN OKLAHOMA? A REVIEW OF NATIONAL RE-ENTRY TRENDS AND OKLAHOMA'S EFFORTS TO PREPARE ITS INMATES FOR LIFE AFTER INCARCERATION

Investigator:

Cara Adney, Master of Science candidate, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK

Purpose:

You are being asked to participate in a research project to examine re-entry trends that Oklahoma Department of Corrections utilizes to help prepare inmates for their release. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your position with the Oklahoma Department of Corrections or a contract agency that houses medium security inmates for the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. You will be asked to provide information about program opportunities and pre-release information for inmates that are housed at your facility or for your agency.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate in the research, you will be asked to take part in a short interview, which could last from thirty minutes to two hours in length. Questions asked during the interview will center around the topics mentioned above, program opportunities for inmates while incarcerated and pre-release planning that take place prior to discharging a prison sentence. If you grant permission, I would like to tape record the interview to help in analyzing data that I collect. Once notes have been transcribed, each tape will be destroyed. Of course, you may choose not to record the interview.

Risk of Participation:

There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those normally encountered in daily life.

Benefits:

This type of research is beneficial because of the large numbers of inmates released from incarceration each year. This research is designed to examine the program opportunities available to inmates who are approaching their release date. Additionally, this program will examine the pre-release efforts that are designed to assist an inmate in his/her transition from incarceration to a successful life once he/she discharges his/her prison sentence.

#### Confidentiality:

I will take stringent measures to protect your confidentiality. Your name will not be used in any reports, publications, or presentations. Additionally, your name will be removed from field notes and interview transcripts and replaced with a pseudonym. If interviews conducted are tape recorded, after the researcher transcribes the interview each tape will be destroyed. All data gathered in this research will be stored in locked file cabinet that only the researcher will have access. Data will be reported in anonymous form, meaning that the names of subjects and other identifying information about the facility will not be used. Data will be retained until all analysis is complete. The OSU IRB has the authority to inspect consent records and data files to assure that compliance with approved procedures.

#### Compensation:

There is no compensation for participation in this research.

#### Contacts:

If you would like additional information about this research, please contact Cara Adney at (918)-225-3336. For information on subject's rights, please contact Dr. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair, 415 Whitehurst Hall, (405) 744-1676.

#### Participant Rights:

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions to choose to withdraw your participation at any time without reprisal or penalty.

APPENDIX C  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

**A SECOND CHANCE IN OKLAHOMA?  
A REVIEW OF NATIONAL RE-ENTRY TRENDS AND OKLAHOMA'S EFFORTS  
TO PREPARE ITS INMATES FOR LIFE AFTER INCARCERATION**

1. What types of programs does your institution/agency offer?
2. What role do these programs play in preparing an inmate for his/her release?
3. Approximately how many people do you currently have participating in program opportunities at your facility?
4. Can you describe the criteria for inmate's participating in program opportunities offered by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections?
5. Can you describe any outcome measures associated with program participation?
6. What is your facility/company mission statement? Can you describe how programs affect the mission?
7. Can you describe the role of case management in the current re-entry process at your facility?
8. Are you familiar with Project Protect, the Serious Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative grant for Oklahoma DOC?
9. If you could change program opportunities for inmates, what would you change?
10. How would you describe the release process for an inmate discharging from your facility?

## VITA

Cara Domenica Adney

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A SECOND CHANCE IN OKLAHOMA?  
A REVIEW OF NATIONAL RE-ENTRY TRENDS AND  
OKLAHOMA'S EFFORT TO PREPARE INMATES FOR LIFE  
AFTER INCARCERATION

Major Field: Sociology

### Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Henry County High School, New Castle, Kentucky in June 1995; received Bachelors of Art in Sociology, Public Relations, Print Journalism, minor in Criminology from Western Kentucky University in May 1999. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Sociology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July 2006.

### Professional Experience:

May 2000 to March 2006 Cimarron Correctional Facility; Cushing, Oklahoma  
Quality Assurance Manager. Former positions include Unit Manager, Inmate Counselor/Case Manager and Correctional Officer.

August 1999 to May 2001 Oklahoma State University, Sociology Department; Stillwater, Oklahoma. Teaching Assistant. Assisted with teaching Research Methods, Social Problems, Criminology, and Field of Corrections.

February 2000 to January 2001 Department of Youth Services; Stillwater, Oklahoma. Youth Mentor. Worked with at risk youth.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Correctional Association  
American Association of Corrections