

August 25, 2020 @OSCI

Hey there interested readers!

I'll be doing something a little different this time. I've been using regular English to describe things that have specific 'prison names' rather than the term itself. For example, I might say "I sent the request slip to so-and-so". What I would say around here is "I put in a kite". So, now I'll include a brief listing of any prison terms I use and their definitions at the end of the post. I'm hoping that it helps people start to understand the experience and lifestyle behind bars.

As promised, my non-philosophical (mostly) thoughts on Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) programming. First, a bit of back ground. The DOC has many different types of programs such as Educational (HSED, tech college classes, English as a Second Language, literacy), Substance Abuse (AODA, Earned Release Program, boot camp), Cognitive (Anger Management, Domestic Abuse, Cognitive Interventions/Thinking for a Change, and Carey guides), Reentry (Self Study Modules/Prelease Curriculum, OARS [assists with SSI/SSDI]) and Sex Offender Treatment (Short-Term [8-11 months], Long-term [24 months], Alternative to Revocation [6 months], Aftercare [Indeterminate]). Usually, you get more access the closer you get to your release date but that doesn't always happen.

So, with all this programming available, why do we have such a high reincarceration rate? Quite simply, noons really wants to do the programs for the most part. There are a significant number of individuals that take programs to 'look good', their own personal development, or to avoid having to pay for said program on the street. However, most of us realize a truth when we get out...most probation/parole officers don't really care what you did to improve yourself in prison and you'll have to do the exact same (or similar) program upon release while paying for it/utilizing the precious time of limited liberty you've earned thru your time in here.

Considering the fact that 40% of new admissions the prison system are only for rule breaking...it's the lesson we learn when we get out. Get a job so you can pay your fees/treatment costs and don't bother asking to be recognized for the work you've done to improve yourself over the years. So, now that the same guy is back? Screw that program shit!

Even new guys that come in under Truth-in-Sentencing, they have no reason to take programs unless it offers immediate release afterwards (ERP or boot camp). Why take a program that has crappy or no pay with (most likely) a lot o restrictions when you can work for more money(max \$33.60/2 weeks on regular institution pay; avg \$17/2 wks) or hustle<sup>1</sup> and make even more than that (range of \$20 to \$150/2 wks; avg \$50/2 wks). I've has to resort to that type of thing a time or two in my bit<sup>2</sup> but keep that on the DL<sup>3</sup>.

Of that 40% of those returned to prison just on rule violations around 60% of those are sex offenders....60%. That's slightly ridiculous when you consider that that can be for something as silly as driving a car with a valid license when you don't have specific permission to operated

that car. That's right, standard SO rule, can't drive a car unless permission is given by your PO (agent) to drive that specific vehicle. Now, to some more current news.

There has been some talk of cutting SO-4 due to the 1/4 million budget cut the DOC is supposedly making. I'm very skeptical as then they'd have to admit that the program is irrelevant and has been a joke all along. It would be nice to remove the façade and be honest for once. The truth is that the majority of people that actually take the program when it's offered is about 15%. For every group (usually 12-15 guys) about a hundred guys get interviewed and around 80 of those turn it down.

Graduation rates for such a group are around 25% to 40%. I've actually seen one group start with 14 guys and only one graduated.... one! Doesn't seem very cost effective does it? Let's add a little here. For each group it takes:

#### Direct Costs

Position	Salary(yearly; est.)
Psychologist	\$90,000
Social Worker-Clinical	\$70,000
Sub-Total:	\$160,000

Each such combo should be able to handle up to 4 groups a year but typically handles two so....

$\$215,000/2 = \$80,000$  per group/yr  
Divide by Avg Grp Size: 12 =  
 $\$6,666$  per member of direct staff cost

#### Indirect Costs

Position	Salary(yearly; est.)
Program Sergeant	\$60,000
Program Director	\$120,000
Participant/Tutor Pay	\$17,000(rnd ↓)

Miscellaneous	Cost(yearly; est.)
Supplies	\$500
Testing/Training	\$12,000
Cert./Continuing Ed.	\$10,000
Sub-Total:	\$219,500

This is a rough estimate of the administrative overhead for appx 48 participants in a year, so:

$\$219,500/48 = \$4562$  per participant(rnd ↓)

So, adding together the direct and indirect costs per participant:

$\$6,666 + \$4562 = \$11,228$  per participant per year.

A total price tag of \$22,456 to "treat" one individual. That's not counting the costs of incarcerating the individual for that timeframe either (est'd @ \$20,000/yr for 2-yrs). Grand total of \$62,456 for that individual to take the program.

Of course, these same resources are used even if the person gets terminated from the program as that group must go on so this estimate is probably low. Even given the more forgiving estimate of 40% completion, the cost would soar to \$32,426 just for treatment. However, I'll use the lower number of \$22,456 because it's more certain and gets my point across.

The total to run one program for a year then is:

Direct	$\$160,000 \times 2 = \$320,000$
Indirect	\$219,500
Total:	\$539,500

Then, you have to consider there are two such programs in the Wisconsin Prison System...one, here at OSCI and one at Racine CI.

$\$539,500 \times 2 = \$1,079,000$  per year. That's directly out of the taxpayers pocket!

This is for a program that is eminently failable and doesn't really reduce recidivism. After all, statistics show that only about 2% of such 'treated' persons convicted of a sex offense (PCOS) go on to reoffend. About 7% of 'untreated' (refuse or get kicked out) PCOS reoffend. So, is the program to be given credit here?

Not a bit! Consider that people who make it thru such intensive treatment are typically more motivated to not reoffend to begin with, the difference is statistically insignificant.

My whole point is that the DOC should start with cutting these wasteful programs. Especially when they start making all kinds of programs 'mandatory'. It just doesn't make sense except as a public pacifier of "Look, we have to release this very bad [pedophile/rapist] because he served his time but you can't blame us because we [offered/gave] this [pedophile/rapist] treatment."

Well, I'd planned to hit a few more areas but that will have to wait for another time. I guess I know more about how PCOS are treated having experienced different methods in here and the disregard of all that on the streets<sup>4</sup>.

As always, stay safe and sane!

Tony

--- Definitions of Prison Lingo ---

<sup>1</sup> Hustle - black market jobs without staff knowledge such as running a store, gambling, legal work, or plain scamming people outta money

<sup>2</sup> Bit - prison sentence or a reference to a certain period of incarceration; i.e. "This is my second bit."

<sup>3</sup> DL - [Down\* Low] designates something to keep one's mouth shut about; a request for secrecy i.e. "Keep it on the DL.";

<sup>4</sup> Streets - Anywhere but in some type of lockup situation as in a jail/prison. i.e. About a released individual: "He's on the streets."

\* Down is a multi use term used for secret activities. Often refers to a guy that secretly has sex with other guys, usually as a sexual top (giver) i.e. "He gets down."