

3
Pg
essay

1-4

9-12

Received
5-29-17
16

✓
Reintegration Issues (essay)

GARY FIELD
D# M05398
Δ 2-111 L

In an interesting excerpt of one of the Faith and Character based required courses, Life Mapping, there is a section on Mental Health that discusses Antisocial Personality Disorder. (APD) I think that this is a subject which is not often considered, but will eventually be found to have a huge impact on who is properly equipped to make a successful re-entry into society.

There is a laundry list of symptoms which have in common a rigid pattern of behavior that may prevent a person from responding appropriately to his environment. According to the DSM-IV-TR (A diagnostic manual of mental disorders), people suffering from APD years ago might have been linked to terms like psychopath or sociopath. It goes on to say that the link between criminality and APD is so recognizable that they are often thought of as the same thing.

It's estimated that in the general population, 3 to 6% of men have APD. However, among inmates it is estimated that 50% have APD. That is a shocking statistic. It also sheds light on a few extremely troubling realities.

2-4
10-12

The first one is that it has become obvious that one of the reasons we have the highest incarceration rate in America than any other country in the world (we have 5% of the world's population and 25% of its prisoners) and we have earned that troubling distinction because we have been criminalizing mental health issues!

Domestic, 95% of whom will eventually be released, are attempting to reenter society at the rate of over 600,000 per year. (From a total inmate pop. of about 2.2 million). If half of those released have A.P.D., that's 300,000 psychopaths / sociopaths being released into a totally vulnerable and unprepared society.

Even if an inmate is released who does not have A.P.D., if they had spent the previous 5, 10 or 20 years among psychopaths, their "social skills" will be lacking and they will be likely to have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Giving such a person a bus ticket and a check for \$100 is a recipe for failure and a statistic in the recidivism rate. The hell of every great society begins with the neglect of its people! It's time to be proactive.

REINTEGRATION
ISSUES

3-4

11-12

How did we become a nation that criminalizes mental health issues as if they were "bad decisions" and not a medical condition?

In the 70's Gerardo Rivora did a groundbreaking documentary on the horrific conditions at Willowbrook, a state-run psychiatric facility in Long Island, N.Y. The brutality and mistreatment of residents and disgusting conditions at Willowbrook shocked the nation. It was a clarion call for action. Unfortunately, the nationwide attempt to reform and regulate these state psychiatric institutions became so burdensome that the states were forced to close them down when they were unable to bring them up to acceptable standards.

When those state-run psychiatric facilities began to close down, there were approximately 547,000 beds available for those suffering from acute psychiatric problems. The general population at that time was about 240 million.

Today's population of about 325 million represents about a 35% increase - if, as expected, there were a corresponding increase in the percentage of the population needing psychiatric care, there should be about 700,000 filling those "beds."

4-4

12-12

However, As of 2015, only 42,000 beds were available for those needing help with severe psychiatric problems. Which begs the question, where are those other 660,000 mentally disturbed people? Have they been cured? Or is it more likely that they make up a big portion of the unshining wounded that we refer to as the homeless population.

Between the members of society who suffer from A.P.D. (Anti-social personality disorder) and wind up "TREATED" by lengthy prison sentences for the consequences of "inability to respond to their environment" - namely, the laws of a civilized society. And those suffering from the more recognizable mental disorders such as schizophrenia and bi-polar disorders, the prisons are full to bursting and their numbers are certain to increase.

Mental health issues constitute an ILLNESS, and drug and alcohol problems have been called a DISEASE. As long as we continue to criminalize mental health issues in this country we can rest assured that the prison industrial complex will remain one of the fastest growing segments of our economy, but the price we will ultimately pay will be much too high!