

Health, Diversity, & Justice

The Impact on Youth

Bruce C. Gage, MD
Department of Corrections
University of Washington

About 18,000 WA DOC Inmates

- About 0.3% of the WA population
- 61% white, 20% African-American, 10% Hispanic, 5% Native-American, 3% Asian/PI
 - WA is 75% white, 4% African-American, 10% Hispanic, 2% Native-American, 7% Asian/PI
- Blacks and Hispanics are under-represented in camps and work releases
 - Variables that may be confounds not examined, e.g. violent crime and gang affiliation
- About half are in for violent crime, 40% for women
- 16% are under 25 (less than 10 under 18)
 - Only 10% of the population is 18-25
- The average age is slowly increasing – now 37 – tho the numbers of youth are not decreasing
- New offenders are disproportionately young

Release & Community Corrections

- 44,000 under Community Corrections (70% non-prison, 30% post)
- About 29,000 under active supervision
 - 68% white, 16% African-American, 8% Hispanic, 3% Native-American 3%, Asian/PI
 - Unable to find age breakdown
- About 27,000 releases annually
 - 18,500 from violation status – ***we do an extremely poor job of transitioning***

Mental Health Care in DOC

- 700 residential mental health beds and “outpatient” services in all prisons
 - 9 psychiatrists
 - 6 mid-level prescribers
 - About 40 Masters and PhD psychologists
- 32% have diagnosed mental illness
 - About 10% severe
 - Over 50% of women on psychotropics, 30% of men
 - PTSD and PTSD of childhood (primarily presenting as Cluster B personality disorder) is huge and under-reported
 - TBI, FASD, and other cognitive disorders vastly under-appreciated
- At least 75% with substance abuse

Breakdown of Diagnoses

Schizophrenia & Other Psychotic Disorders	1178	7.5%
Mood Disorders	3596	22.8%
Total unduplicated pts with severe Dx (above)	3970	25.2%
Anxiety Disorders	2367	15.0%
Eating Disorders	49	0.3%
Attention Deficit Disorder	504	3.2%
Tic Disorders	12	0.1%
Sleep Disorders (other than primary insomnia)	22	0.1%
Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders	115	0.7%
Delirium, Dementia, Amnestic & other Cognitive Disorders	221	1.4%
Learning Disorders	28	0.2%
Adjustment Disorders	276	1.7%
Impulse Control Disorders	191	1.2%

Diagnoses in 25 and Under

Schizophrenia & Other Psychotic Disorders	189	6.8%
Mood Disorders	556	20%
Total unduplicated pts with severe Dx (above)		
Anxiety Disorders	362	13%
Eating Disorders	5	0.2%
Attention Deficit Disorder	78	2.8%
Tic Disorders	1	
Sleep Disorders (other than primary insomnia)	6	0.2%
Sexual and Gender Identity Disorders	13	0.5%
Delirium, Dementia, Amnestic & other Cognitive Disorders	31	1.1%
Learning Disorders	7	0.3%
Adjustment Disorders	35	1.3%
Impulse Control Disorders	39	1.4%

Parents in Prison

- Ca. 1.5 million U.S. children have a parent in prison – vastly disproportionately non-white (Mumola, 2000)
 - Ca. 130,000 of them have a mother in prison
 - Few social systems take into account the incarceration of a parent (Bernstein, 2005)
- WA DOC is 8.5% women, slightly higher than national avg of 7.1%
 - 17.5% of those on supervision are women
 - Active mothering programs in WA prisons

Crisis

- For the first time in decades, DOC beds are being cut – about 10%
- Have we seen the light?
 - Community Corrections taking the biggest hit
 - New pressure to send more mentally ill to prison
- Have we seen the darkness?
 - Major emphasis on keeping women, especially mothers, out of prison
 - The rhetoric in sentencing has changed from “just desserts” to “evidence based practices” for reducing recidivism and other public health language

Community

- The melting pot experiment
 - Poor integration – re-segregation?
- The sense of community is diminishing
 - Mobile society
 - Electronic entertainment
 - Single parent families and both parents working increasing hours
 - Fear – “news”
- Gangs are a community
 - Code, support, money, defense, jobs, identity
 - Skinheads, Crips, Bloods, Norteños, Soreños...

Psychological Perspective

- Only 50% of the variance of violence can be accounted for by attributes of the individual – the rest is from the environment or environment/individual interaction
- Transgenerational and environmental contributions are huge – abuse, drugs
- Psychological-mindedness in our country has been diminishing
- Children need proper nurturance to develop mentally, emotionally, and physically – the 3 Rs are not enough
- Moral development is a reality that can be reliably measured and tracked

The Problem of Moral Relativism

- Undermines truth of moral development
- Allows degradation of values
 - “Rule-based” and “greed-based” morality have been in ascendancy
 - Behavior emphasized over culpability
- Contributes to group polarization rather than unification
- Undermines the creation of and adherence to collective aims

The Price

- Chasing money, empty hearts
- Poverty and conflict
- Hardened, grasping people with entitled rage and hapless victims
- Children alienated and adrift without a sense of values, future, or security turn to drugs, gangs, and destruction of their bodies
- Mentally ill “dying with their rights on”
- Communities torn apart by their differences rather than brought together by their complementarity

Big Ideas

- Recognize that not all values are equal but embrace that nobody has the “Truth”
 - Civil discourse
 - Cultural exchange
- Interventions and knowledge based on evidence rather than opinion
- Transitions are critical moments – high risk of failure
- Children need to be cared for as individuals with potentials not trained as future workers or treated as objects
 - Stop abuse
 - Embrace humanism in the schools
- Above all, embrace our responsibility to each other and especially those in difficulty

Gage's Treatment Plan

- Give help and hope, not money – welfare reform
- Moral development, not moral training
- Meet people where they are – reach out
 - Talk *to* people, not *at* them – be wary of overly cognitive approaches
- Full service community centers
 - Medical, mental health, activities, connections to spiritual and religious elements in the community
 - Use people with real life experience to reach out and “hook” youth – extenders - maybe even get the gangs to help – they want what is good for their community
- Transitions are key – we must do a better job of continuity from institutions to the community ***and vice versa***