

Rehabilitation of Delinquent Adolescents in Kenya:

Challenges and Implication for
Counseling.

Introduction

- Delinquent is mostly used to refer to juvenile offenders aged around 16 to 18 years.
- Delinquent behaviors encompass aggressive acts, theft, vandalism, fire setting, truancy, running away, defying authority and other antisocial behaviors.

- Delinquency trends lead to adult crime and thereby a lifelong criminal career.
- This can be prevented if delinquent adolescents are effectively rehabilitated.
- Lauer [1998] contends that effective rehabilitation programs are those that focus on changing behavior and beliefs conducive to crime.

- They should promote personal responsibility and provide offenders with real opportunities to succeed in legitimate occupations .

- Siegal and senna (1997) adds that educational, vocational training and specific counseling strategies can be effective if they are intensive, relate to program goals and meet adolescent's individual needs .

- In Kenya, juvenile offenders are taken to Juvenile Rehabilitation Centers for rehabilitation.
- However, effectiveness and success of rehabilitation the juvenile offenders has been questioned in various studies.

- According to Siegal senna (1997) if successful rehabilitation were not the ultimate goal of juvenile corrections, the use of residential facilities would be an expensive exercise in futility.
- Every effort must therefore be put to make the rehabilitation an effective process.

Purpose

- This paper explores the status of the Rehabilitation Schools and makes recommendations on how counseling and other psycho-social interventions can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the schools.

objectives

- To establish qualifications of staff members.
- To find out the perception of the rehabilitation school by the rehabilitees.
- To identify the rehabilitation programs in place
- To asses parents involvement in the rehabilitation process.
- To establish whether the schools environment was conducive for rehabilitation.

Methods/Description

- The study used a descriptive survey design.
- Both workers and adolescents were used in the study.
- The age of the adolescents ranged from 14 to 18 years.
- Methods used included questionnaires, interviews and a check list of the facilities and programs was used.

Findings

- A higher percentage of staff were female (61.5%) and majority were above 35 years.
- The gender of the adolescents was (55%) female and (45%) male.
- Majority had stayed in the rehabilitation schools for between one and three years.

- This is because none of the schools had all classes (1-8).
- This indicates non- continuity even in the counseling process and subsequent rehabilitation process

Staff

- Majority of staff were trained teachers (38%) followed by social workers (23.1).
- In all the schools used in the study, there was no trained counselor.
- However (7.7%) combined nursing and counseling while (15.5%) combined teaching and counseling .

Adolescent awareness

- The study revealed a lack of understanding among the adolescents as to why they were in the rehabilitation school.
- Only (13.8 %.) were aware of the nature of the school and only (41.4%) were aware of the purpose of being there.

- Incorrect information can be interpreted as deception of the adolescent leading to dissatisfaction with the school which can be an impediment to effective rehabilitation.
- Inadequate involvement of adolescents already undergoing rehabilitation process was indicated by (53.8%) and staff members by (46.2%).

Programmes

- The main programs in the school were guidance and counseling, educational, vocational and spiritual training.

Parental Involvement

- 92.3 percent of staff members indicated a below average involvement of parents in the rehabilitation of their children.
- This is despite the fact that parent involvement is vital in the rehabilitation process and in its absence the process could be ineffective.

School environment

- The school climate was non conducive for rehabilitation to occur.
- The adolescents reported that they were unhappy with caning and punishment (76%) and the attendance of teachers in class (55%), being locked up early (48.3%).

Recommendations

- Train staff in basic counseling skills and attach professional counselors in the schools.
- Explain of purpose and expectations involving teachers and also adolescents already undergoing rehabilitation.

- Diversify programmes and activities.
- These should include psycho- educational programs meant to educate both the parents and their adolescents on the challenges of growing up.
- Adolescents could be educated on developmental aspects and life skills such as the importance of goal setting and self esteem.

- More parental involvement needs to be encouraged. (41.2%) indicated the need for open day's programs and visiting days.
- This would enable the adolescents keep in touch with their parents while parents make a follow up on the progress of their children

- Creating a caring and supportive atmosphere.
- In Canada's Young Offenders Act, a famous quote that goes with it is
- *It is not law, but only love and religion that can save or reclaim"*
- *"Every juvenile delinquent shall be treated not as a criminal, but as a misdirected and misguided child"*

- Individual and group counselling is recommended.
- The individual techniques are aimed at:
- Analyzing individual's past experiences to diagnose the cause of the behavior
- Giving adolescents confidence and strength
- Shaping the current behavior through a system of reward and punishment.
- Development of skills.

- The group counseling focus on drug and alcohol, self-esteem development, role model support sessions.
- Group sessions to deal with appropriate expression of anger and learn methods of understanding and controlling such behaviors.
- Empower the delinquents to take personal control by providing them with a range of opportunities for autonomy and personal development

- **THANK YOU FOR LISTENING**