

# The Halfway House: A Historical, Canadian, and International Perspective

by R.E. Bob Brown\*

## Introduction

Internationally it is accepted that a critical role of criminal justice systems is the protection of the community. The Correctional Service of Canada states that there are, in Canada's criminal justice system, four distinct, interdependent components that must always work together (<http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/education/lb1-eng.shtml>):

- The police forces;
- The courts;
- The correctional services; and
- The parole boards.

Of significance with regard to the corrections component is the important role that is played by community corrections in responding to community protection, which is the paramount concern of a criminal justice system. Community corrections responds to this concern by introducing and supporting tertiary crime prevention strategies and programs that contribute to safe prisoner reintegration, timely offender resettlement, and supportive aftercare.

A key program element in the corrections pillar is what has historically been referred to as the "halfway house." This term continues to be used today in Singapore and in Japan, where the Japanese government provides community-based houses with financial support, although they are owned and managed by private, nonprofit rehabilitation services. The first halfway houses were established in Japan at the beginning of the 20th century. In 2007, there were 101 such facilities throughout the country (Aizawa, 2007).

The term "halfway house" takes on various different names depending on the jurisdiction. It is evident that there is no single definition that can adequately encompass the wide range of facilities that are called halfway houses or are variations of the halfway house theme (McCartt & Mangogna, 1974a, 1974b). This was evident 35 years ago and is applicable today.

In Canada, a halfway house for adult offenders operated by a nongovernmental

organization is referred to as a "community residential center" (CRC), whereas one operated by the government is called a "community correctional center" (CCC). A recent review of the United States Bureau of Prisons website indicates that there were 236 active contracts for residential reentry centers (RRCs) as of March 2010. In England and Wales, "approved premises" (APs), formerly known as "bail" or "probation hostels," are owned and managed primarily by the National Probation Directorate (2006). A small number are run by voluntary sector providers, but all are required to work to the same operating standards. In the People's Republic of China, the Sunshine Halfway House was opened in Chaoyang District, Beijing, on July 8, 2008, with a potential residential capacity of 200 clients.

## Social Reintegration

At this point, it would be appropriate to further review the circumstances related to a prisoner returning to the community and the possible relationship he or she might have with a halfway house or community center. Social reintegration can be understood as the support given to offenders during reentry into society following detention (UNODC, 2009). The Council of Europe distinguishes between two forms of social reintegration:

- Resettlement; and
- Aftercare.

Resettlement is the process of a prisoner's reintegration back into the community in a positive and managed way. It refers to the period of supervision after the offender has left prison but is still subject to certain statutory obligations, e.g., a period of parole. It is to be distinguished from aftercare, which means the process of reintegrating an offender, on a voluntary basis and after final release from detention, back into the community in a constructive, planned, and supervised manner. As noted, resettlement involves a statutory obligation, whereas aftercare is on a voluntary basis (Council of Europe, 2010).

Halfway houses are used internationally in both resettlement and aftercare schemes. To illustrate this, a further definition of the AP scheme in England and Wales highlights a significant difference. The National Probation Directorate (2006) indicates that APs provide controlled accommodation for offenders under the supervision of the probation service

and provide a greater degree of supervision for offenders than is possible in other forms of housing. Almost all residents in approved premises are placed there by the courts (on community orders or on bail) or by the parole board (on license). Admission decisions are made by the probation service, based on a thorough risk assessment.

Of further relevance is that offenders at APs are required to pay their rent, and their regime is carefully structured. Indeed, some offenders leaving open prisons complain that APs are more restrictive than the prisons they left. Most premises are situated in residential areas, reflecting the importance placed on reintegrating offenders back into their communities (White, 2010).

## Historical Perspective

The precise origin of the halfway house is unknown. Some social historians suggest that it grew out of early acts of Christian charity. For example, St. Leonard established a monastery during the middle of the first century that provided room and board for convicts whose release he had been able to obtain from the king (James, 1975).

A second point of origin is found in the evolution of prison systems themselves. As early as the 1850s, Sir Walter Crofton's "Irish System" included a transitional experience. After an institutional period, certain inmates were permitted to work outside the institution in the community, returning at night to reside in an "intermediate institution" or halfway house. The emphasis was placed on work in the community and preparing the prisoner for a full release. In an 1858 paper entitled the "Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Sciences," Crofton is quoted stating:

We must deal with criminals in smaller numbers, and less artificially, before their discharge; and we must apply such special training as shall fit them for free life, and make them meet employers. We must teach them of an honest world of which they know but little (Smith, 1990).

The Crofton contribution appears to be the most direct forerunner of the contemporary halfway house. The final phase for the prisoner in the Crofton process, if

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successful, was release on a “ticket of leave,” the precursor to contemporary parole.

In England, the 1914 Criminal Justice Administration Act gave the courts powers to add a condition of residence to a probation order and paved the way for the establishment of hostels for young people. Over a period of almost a century, the contribution of hostels to the delivery of criminal justice has altered significantly, and the hostels, known as approved premises since the implementation of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act of 2000, are used increasingly for supervising high-risk adult male offenders following their release from prison (Windup, 2007).

In the United States, in 1845, the Quakers established the Isaac T. Hopper House in New York City. Approximately 20 years later in Boston, a home for discharged female prisoners was established that provided shelter, instruction, and employment for released female prisoners. In 1886, despite the opposition from the American Prison Association, Maud Booth, along with her husband and coleader of Volunteers of America, established Hope Hall for former prisoners in New York City. In 1889, the Philadelphia House of Industry was opened, receiving parolees from Pennsylvania prisons (McCarthy & McCarthy, 1991). Along with being “harassed” by the police, such facilities were not supported by the paroling authorities. The basic objection was that parole regulations did not allow the association of a released prisoner with former prisoners, who were, or in this case, fellow residents (McCartt & Mangogna, 1974a, 1974b). Other facilities opened elsewhere in the United States at this time, but there was little further development until the 1950s, when the halfway house movement in the United States was revitalized when St. Leonard’s and Dismas House were opened by clergymen.

In 1947, Ingles House for young women was founded in Toronto, Canada, to serve women released from Mercer Reformatory (White, 2009). A number of Canada’s first halfway houses have their origins in the church. In 1954, the Anglican House Association in Toronto established Beverly Lodge for youths on probation and from training schools and reformatories. In 1962, the All Saints Anglican Church in Windsor, Ontario, led by its director, the Reverend T.N. Libby, founded St. Leonard’s House (James, 1975).

The senior halfway house in the British Isles appears to be the Norman House, which since 1954 has served as the prototype for a number of other foundations. Since

1959, the Langley House Trust, formed by an association named Christian Teamwork, has operated a growing chain of houses provided by civic and religious organizations in a number of cities in England.

## Community Protection, Crime Prevention, and Prisoner Resettlement

A quick look at the last 35 years would be appropriate. The importance of crime prevention and the relation between crime prevention and prisoners returning to the community under any type of conditional release, parole, or license—be it to a structured facility or not—also deserve attention. Although there was a significant increase in “residential capacity” during the 1970s and 1980s, this period also suffered through a roller coaster ride of academic, community, and political lack of support. The length of this paper will not allow for an adequate review of the effect over the years of the “get tough on crime agenda” or of Martinson’s 1974 conclusion that “nothing works.” Suffice it to say that both have had a significant impact. The issue of community understanding and involvement in the correctional process will be addressed below. Many people in the community have an opinion on crime prevention, prisoner resettlement, and community protection; however, few have an informed opinion. Unfortunately, a degree of complacency on the part of the “corrections community” has contributed to misunderstanding and misinformation on the part of civil societies.

In June 2008, the secretary general of the European Organisation of Probation (2008) provided the following crime prevention framework (attributed to Professor Canton from De Montfort University) while speaking at a workshop entitled “Prevention Meets Probation” in Leipzig, Germany:

- Primary prevention—through various forms of environmental design or manipulation;
- Secondary prevention—identifying and working with those considered most likely to offend; and
- Tertiary prevention—working with known offenders to reduce the incidence of their offending.

The Australian Institute of Criminology (2003) defines tertiary crime prevention as focusing on the operation of the criminal justice system and deals with offending after it has happened. The primary focus is on the lives of known offenders in an attempt to prevent them from reoffending.

Tertiary crime prevention is the kind of work that probation officers try to do with offenders under their supervision to help

them stay out of trouble in the future (Shaf- toe, 2004). These interventions are the main business of the criminal justice system and its correctional interventions into offenders’ lives (Gilling, 1997).

The issue of post-prison “conditional release” resonates internationally with criminal justice professionals because it relates to prisoner rehabilitation and resettlement. The paramount consideration of the criminal justice system remains community protection. However, the goals of community protection, crime prevention, and offender resettlement are compatible (Brown & Andersen, 2005).

## Alternatives to Incarceration

It is reported that in January 2009, more than 9.8 million people were being held in penal institutions around the world. This was an increase of 300,000 from 2007 (Walmsley, 2009). This alarming upward trend has received considerable attention by the international community. This, in turn, has drawn a heightened focus on alternatives to incarceration. In 1990, the United Nations *Standard Minimum Rules on Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules)* advanced the discussion of alternatives by highlighting the following alternative dispositions:

- Rule 9.2* Post-sentencing dispositions may include:
- (a) Furlough and halfway houses;
  - (b) Work or education release;
  - (c) Various forms of parole;
  - (d) Remission;
  - (e) Pardon.

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted, on October 14, 2010, the United Nations *Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)*. The following rule highlights alternative dispositions, including the halfway house;

- Rule 45.* Prison authorities shall utilize options such as home leave, open prisons, halfway houses and community-based programmes and services to the maximum possible extent for women prisoners, to ease their transition from prison to liberty, to reduce stigma and to re-establish their contact with their families at the earliest possible stage.

There is a strong argument to be made that a heightened focus on the above dispositions and alternatives to imprisonment as least restrictive options, given the dynamics of the offense, would lead to a reduction in

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prison populations. This issue was addressed further by the Council of Europe (1999) when considering prison overcrowding and prison population inflation. The Council adopted the following principle:

*Principle 23.* The development of measures should be promoted which reduce the actual length of the sentence served, by giving preference to individualised measures, such as early conditional release (parole), over collective measures for the management of prison overcrowding (amnesties, collective pardons).

Although it is legitimate, and absolutely necessary for economic and humanitarian reasons, to limit the use of imprisonment, community sanctions must be considered measures in and of themselves (Landreville, 1995). The use of noncustodial sanctions and alternative measures should not be used as a management tool for a prison population. Noncustodial sanctions and alternative measures such as the use of a halfway house as part of a resettlement plan for a prisoner should be based on the merit of the plan, and the endorsed plan should be consistent with the goal of tertiary crime prevention.

This goal, however should not detract from the humanitarian focus identified above. Such a focus received considerable attention at the Latin American Seminar of the 2009 International Corrections and Prisons Association Conference. The deliberations by the Latin American correctional professionals resulted in the following point contained in the Barbados Declaration (2009):

9. We understand that despite the existence of rules and standards regarding alternative sentencing and options for the early release from prison, these are not implemented enough by our justice administrators, as they do not have the human or material resources which they need to guarantee effective protection of the community.

## Resettlement and the Halfway House

The move from prison on release into the community is always a difficult one for the inmate. For there to be effective post-release supervision, programs completed in prison during the sentence, or the plans and arrangements that are made there, must be followed up, acted upon, and reinforced by outside agencies. Too frequently, this is not achieved, a failure due to a lack of

cooperation, understanding, and communication between the prison and the outside.

It appears that pre-release and resettlement responsibilities are often overlooked in the prisons, are too subordinate to other duties, and are not given sufficient weight by prison administrations. Moreover, a focus on improving and providing accommodation, employment, and training opportunities for inmates invariably improves the effectiveness of the final pre-release arrangements (Kuhn et al., 2000).

The large majority of persons sent to prison will eventually be released. Despite this fact, many criminal justice systems have given little attention to the development of programs to assist offenders to reenter the community. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of reoffending, which may have a significant impact on prison populations (Griffiths & Murdoch, 2009). Concerns about this likelihood have been addressed in a number of countries.

**Australia and Scotland.** In 2007, the chair of the Prisoners Review Board of Western Australia reflected on the issue that there are a number of prisoners who find it difficult to return to mainstream community life. If prisoners have mental health problems or chronic drug dependence, they often need accommodation that can provide some level of support and supervision. Suitable residential facilities are in very short supply, and long waiting lists may place facilities beyond the reach of many prisoners who either remain in custody or struggle to avoid a return to prison because of a failure to comply with parole conditions (Borg et al., 2007).

Best practices suggest that the best way of giving practical assistance to prisoners after their release is to provide them with supported accommodation where they can receive food, shelter, and emotional support while they reestablish their lives. In Scotland and in Victoria, Australia, a number of public housing properties have been set aside for prisoners, where they can receive emotional support and practical assistance with budgeting and cooking, as well as accommodation. It is well established that halfway houses and other targeted supported accommodation facilities are extremely successful in facilitating ex-prisoners' reintegration into the community (Walsh, 2004).

**Japan.** Halfway houses in Japan primarily provide room, board, and guidance to juvenile and adult probationers, parolees, and other discharged offenders who lack a suitable place to live. In these facilities, persons released from correctional institutions, such as juvenile training schools, prisons, and detention houses are provided with shelter and other services

for a certain period of time. In addition, prior to a final disposition, the family court often refers juveniles to halfway houses, where they are given guidance and their behavior is observed. Not only do halfway houses help residents with secure employment in the community, they also provide offenders with treatment for alcoholism, training in social skills, and special vocational guidance, among other things (Aizawa, 2007).

**Canada.** As noted above, in Canada, a community residential center (CRC) is a halfway house owned and operated by a non-governmental agency. Each agency-owned facility contracts with the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) to provide accommodation, counseling, and supervision of 15 to 30 offenders who are usually on day parole. Offenders participate in community-based activities and return nightly to a supervised residence. Day parole generally occurs during a six-month period prior to full parole. The contract with the CSC sets out detailed requirements regarding levels of control and assistance. There are about 150 CRCs under contract annually preparing offenders for full parole, whereby offenders live by themselves or with their families. Most offenders are eligible for full parole after serving one-third of their sentences). Day parole releases to community residential centers and community correctional centers in Canada over a five-year period had an average success rate of 82.28% (Public Safety Canada, 2009; see Table 1).

In addition, the CSC operates 16 of its own community correctional centers (CCCs). In these facilities, the director, parole officers, and support staff work as a team, often in cooperation with community partners, to supervise and provide programs for offenders and to prepare them for full parole.

**Singapore.** The Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) facilitates the establishment and coordination of halfway houses (HWHs) under the Singapore Prisons Halfway House scheme, which was started in April 1995. Under the Halfway House scheme, inmates with poor family support may spend the last stage of their detention at any of the 10 participating HWHs. The Halfway House scheme is a residential program that provides inmates with counseling, vocational therapy, and moral or religious support. SCORE conducts an annual monitoring and evaluation of HWHs. In 2008, the overall completion rate was 89.9% and the relapse rate was 9.24% (SCORE, 2009).

**The United States.** Although no one argues against the benefits of having inmates

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transition to a halfway house facility prior to complete release, in the United States, these programs had all but disappeared by 2003. Fewer than 10% of all prison releasees that year lived in a halfway house or other community facility prior to freedom in the community (Petersilia, 2003). The availability has improved over the last seven years. As of March 2010, there were 236 active contracts with the Bureau for residential reentry centers (RRCs). Petersilia (2003) suggests that ideally, all inmates who have spent a considerable period incarcerated in the United States would transition to a halfway house or day reporting center, and that these centers would serve as a central location for parole agents, police, social service personnel, offenders, and their families to share information and manage the reentry process (Petersilia, 2003).

**Variations on a Theme**

The “Irish System,” as introduced in the 1850s by Sir Walter Crofton, included a transitional experience referred to as an “intermediate institution” or halfway house. It is apparent that internationally there are many variations on this theme.

**Prison Camps—India.** In India, prisoners between the ages of 30 and 46 who are serving prison terms in Rajasthan State may transfer to an open prison camp at Sanganer, Jaipur, after completing one-third of their sentence, which, for a life sentence is calculated to be seven years. In addition, prison authorities ensure that the prisoners meet established criteria, including that they are free from mental or physical infirmity, have demonstrated good conduct while in prison, and are residents of Rajasthan.

Once at the open prison camp, these prisoners construct their own dwellings,

where they live with their families, who are encouraged to join them. Their children attend local schools. Prisoners cultivate the camp’s land, perform public works, conduct independent businesses, or work for outside employers. They self-govern their camp community through an elected council of village elders, with the handful of camp officials focusing on facilitating employment and other matters, rather than on security. The prisoners receive remission credited against their sentences and having completed their sentences, are then released. This model is being replicated by other states in India and is also attracting interest in other countries in the region. (UNODC, 2007).

**Tús Nua Apartments—Ireland.**

The Tús Nua Apartments, in Dublin, Ireland, are funded through the probation service and work in close partnership with the St. Vincent de Paul and Dochas Prison Services in delivering an accommodation and support program for female prisoners released in Dublin (<http://www.depauireland.org/our-services/on-the-map/republic-of-ireland/tus-nua/>). The project accommodates six women in single-bedded rooms for up to 12 months. Each room is furnished and contains a kitchenette. All service users have access to communal space and the garden, and all service users are appointed a key worker. Together, they identify a care plan for their stay, which addresses life skills, budgeting, alcohol harm reduction, detoxification access, and health and mental health support.

**Resettlement Estate Regime and Support Program—England.**

In England, Resettlement Estate Regimes were introduced. The role of the resettlement estate is to prepare for release suitable prisoners who have identified resettlement

needs and who are ordinarily sentenced to three years or more, including life-sentenced prisoners. Only formally designated prisons will be allowed to operate resettlement. The director of operations will designate establishments or parts of establishments as belonging to the resettlement estate on the basis of a formal business case. All prisoners have the opportunity to maintain and develop appropriate community ties and to prepare for their release (HM Prison Service, 2001).

During the 2006–2007 review period, the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO, 2008) provided resettlement support in 42 prisons and helped more than 14,600 prisoners. NACRO’s Resettlement Plus helpline provided a further 26,500 people with information and advice about housing, employment, and the impact of a criminal conviction. In addition, NACRO provided housing and support to nearly 3,000 former offenders and vulnerable homeless people.

**External Residential Programming—Sweden.**

In Sweden, substance-abusing prisoners who want to begin to deal with their dependence during the prison sentence can receive assistance from the probation service to, for example, identify a suitable program. Section 34 of the Prison Treatment Act provides that prisoners may be allowed at any time and for any suitable period to reside away from the prison in order to take part in any special program that is likely to reduce relapse into crime. Section 34 is used mainly for drug or alcohol abuse (Lindholm, 2005).

**Community Relations**

During the late 1800s, the pioneers of the halfway house journey in the United States were “harassed” by the police and strongly opposed by the American Prison Association and the parole authorities. At the turn of

Year (# Clients)	2004–2005 (3,103)		2005–2006 (3,043)		2006–2007 (3,118)		2007–2008 (3,088)		2008–2009 (3,073)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Successful completion	2,548	82.1	2,483	81.6	2,547	81.7	2,517	81.5	2,597	84.5
Revocation for breach of conditions <sup>a</sup>	397	12.8	397	13.0	381	12.2	424	13.7	375	12.2
Revocation with nonviolent offense	136	4.4	142	4.7	167	5.4	132	4.3	85	2.8
Revocation with violent offense	22	0.7	21	0.7	23	0.7	15	0.5	16	0.5

<sup>a</sup> Includes revocation with outstanding charges.

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the 21st century, halfway houses and other transitional inmate programs faced tough political battles. Correctional leaders and local politicians were wary of supporting such facilities for fear of being associated with highly publicized failures (Petersilia, 2003). Such opposition was not, and is not, restricted to politicians or other members of the criminal justice system.

As community-based programs, halfway houses must be community integrated and involved and responsive to the concerns, fears, and anxieties of community neighbors. Halfway houses that fail to establish close and effective community relations may expect, at best, suspicion and frequent misunderstandings of their program. Open hostility is equally as likely to occur. It is unwise and mistaken to regard the community as a necessary evil into which the facility has been thrust. There are only advantages to be gained from open, regular, and responsive community relations (Rachin, 1976).

In Canada in 1996, the Solicitor General's Department of Canada coordinated a halfway house consultation process with the community. Although most participants understood the concept of a halfway house, many had questions as to how it operated. Participants understood that these facilities represented a significant cost saving when considered as an alternative to incarceration and also felt that some inmates could be released to day parole. The important condition in accepting the idea of earlier parole related to the resources allocated to halfway houses. Many participants were concerned that earlier parole would simply be used as a cost-saving tool and stressed the importance of needing to invest many more resources in halfway houses. In fact, many participants felt that the overall corrections budget should have remained the same even if the level of incarceration decreased, allowing for greater investment in rehabilitation and halfway houses. This overture to the community and the community's response strengthen the perspective that resettlement should not be used as a prison population management tool. Resettlement and alternatives to incarceration must stand and evolve on their own merits and be resourced accordingly.

The latest edition of the American Correctional Association's *Performance-Based Standards for Adult Community Residential Services* (2004) provides guidance and applicable standards in this area:

- Policies provide for communication and cooperation with community agencies and other components of the criminal justice system (4.7F.04).

- The facility has an advisory board that is representative of the community in which it is located that meets at least annually (4.7F.05).
- The facility actively identifies and implements activities that contribute to the community (4.7F.07).

The challenges to an agency that attempted recently to introduce a halfway house into a community in Calgary, Canada—Canada's third largest municipality—are highlighted in the following two Calgary newspaper articles:

For several years, the society has sought a new location for the halfway house, and has settled on a property in the Manchester industrial area in southeast Calgary. The society held an information session Tuesday night at the site to speak with locals about the proposal. Construction of a new facility at that location will depend on whether the society gets the nod from city council. But the society is also facing a series of concerns from nearby residents, worried that such a concentration of parolees poses safety issues in their communities. A resident, who has three young children and lives in Elboya, notes the halfway house will be not far from Stanley Park. "I find it personally shocking that they would even suggest putting a facility like this so close to Stanley Park and Elboya," he said. "My kids are there at those parks all the time." But once a halfway house is put in a community, locals tend to change their minds and become supportive of the facility, according to the executive director of Calgary's John Howard Society (Cuthbertson, May 26, 2010).

There's no question many Canadians are dissatisfied with what they perceive as a revolving-door justice system. Criminals, they say, are in and out of custody so quickly they barely have time to adjust to the loss of their freedom. But the reality is no matter how long offenders are jailed, there is no way we can lock up everyone who breaches the law and throw away the key. Most convicts, save those who have committed such vile crimes they stand no chance for parole, will eventually be reintegrated into society. There are two ways to do this. Either make offenders serve every minute of the sentences they're given, or gradually give them freedom through various steps of parole. While the former may seem attractive to some, the latter is much

more logical in a society whose goal is to reduce criminal behaviour. Cutting convicts loose from prison without any means of supporting themselves and no control over their movements is a recipe for disaster. It is far better their release is done cautiously through a series of small steps which allows them to find jobs, get training, and be monitored when they're most vulnerable to return to their old ways. That is what halfway houses do—provide a vital first step on what society hopes will be each criminal's return to being a productive citizen (Martin, May 26, 2010).

It would appear that community education initiatives related to community corrections in Calgary contributed to the balanced perspective evident in the second article.

What little research there is in Canada indicates that the presence of a correctional halfway house has no impact on the crime rate in the neighborhood in which the home is located. Furthermore, property values in all neighborhoods fluctuate, and no research has shown that these fluctuations are affected by the presence of a halfway house. Adverse public opinion regarding these issues may well be due to lack of knowledge (Benzvy-Miller, 1990).

## Identifying Evidence-Based Practices

The international criminal justice community and, more specifically, the international community corrections community are eager to identify evidenced-based practices in relation to crime prevention, community protection, and offender resettlement that are successful, achievable, and sustainable. This would be consistent with the desires of the scholars and professionals who contributed to both a Council of Europe and a United Nations perspective on the need for research:

26. Research on the effects of community sanctions and measures should not be limited to the simple recording of post-supervision convictions but should make use of more sensitive criteria. Such research should examine, for example, the frequency and seriousness of re-offending together with personal and social indicators of adjustment in the community, and the views of offenders on the implementation of community sanctions and measures.

27. To the greatest possible extent research should enable comparisons to be made of the effectiveness of different programmes (Council of Europe (2000).

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20.1 As an essential aspect of the planning process, efforts should be made to involve both public and private bodies in the organization and promotion of research on the non-custodial treatment of offenders.

20.2 Research on the problems that confront clients, practitioners, the community and policy-makers should be carried out on a regular basis.

20.3 Research and information mechanisms should be built into the criminal justice system for the collection and analysis of data and statistics on the implementation of non-custodial treatment for offenders (United Nations [Tokyo Rules] 1990).

Leading researchers, practitioners, and clinicians, armed with meta-analyses, systematic reviews, and consensus panel reviews, have articulated a number of effective practices for improving offender outcomes. These include:

- Treatment orientations such as therapeutic communities, family-based treatment, and cognitive behavioral therapy;
- Using standardized substance abuse and risk assessment tools to match offenders to treatment;
- Incorporating treatment phases with some type of aftercare services;
- Treatments lasting 90 days or more;
- The employment of qualified staff to deliver treatment;
- The use of incentives and sanctions; and
- The implementation of services that address co-occurring substance abuse and mental health disorders (Perdoni et al., 2008).

It has also been found that community settings are better than an institutional setting in relation to effective correctional programming (Borzycki & Makkai, 2007).

In 1976, researchers reviewing 35 studies of correctional halfway houses found that an equal number of the quasi-experimental and experimental studies reported either no differences between groups or lower recidivism among halfway house residents. In 1982, 44 separate evaluations of halfway house programs were identified and again found inconsistent results. A review in 1992 found that the residential programs were often quite small, were quite varied in their programs, and served a mixed clientele. Moreover, most of the programs operated in the private sector and did not like to be externally evaluated. For these reasons, good evaluations

are rare. A further review in 1992 found that there was some general evidence to suggest that residential programs might work better than direct release to parole because of the assistance provided in reintegrating the offender into the community (Clear & Braga, 1995).

A conclusion drawn in England indicates that a significant barrier to effective practice is that little is known about “what works” in relation to residential work with offenders. Further research is thus needed to develop an evidence base (Wincup, 2007).

In 2009, the St. Leonard’s Society of Canada identified a lack of evidence-based research on “what works” in halfway houses. The Society’s primary concerns were the gap in knowledge about halfway houses generally, the trend toward accreditation for programs and services, the lack of a framework that could be used by the houses to that end, and the need for the public to have access to relevant comprehensive information about these 175 nongovernmental resources in the community (White, 2009).

## Conclusion

The history of halfway houses dates back to the mid-1800s. Although this paper has not concentrated on the successes of this supportive resettlement program, there have been many. Chronicling the successes, however, is not the challenge. The challenge is, instead, in identifying evidenced-based practices related to halfway houses and community residential facilities. Internationally relevant rules and standards are supportive of this challenge. The key next step involves community corrections programs, with their respective supporting or government agencies, accepting this challenge. By doing this, halfway houses can continue to evolve as a critical program in support of community protection, crime prevention, and safe offender resettlement.

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### CORRECTIONS PERSIST, from page 4

supportive of this challenge. The key next step involves community corrections programs, with their respective supporting or government agencies, accepting this challenge.

A major challenge for community corrections today is the management of offenders with mental health problems and concerns. The number of offenders entering and leaving prison with diagnosed mental health issues is increasing, and it is important that community

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corrections providers become more alert to the needs of these offenders and seek innovative practices and partnerships to meet this challenge. In the second article in this issue, Drs. Jeffrey Draine and Daniel Herman provide an excellent overview of the issues of this specialized population and present an intervention model—the critical time intervention (CTI) model. The CTI model involves three stages: transition to the community, try-out, and transfer of care. The authors then explore the implications of CTI for services and policy initiatives.

—Donald G. Evans ■