

Offender Substance Abuse Report

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Editors' Welcome

When first presented with the idea of yet another publication on substance abuse, frankly, we winced. It seemed to us that there was already an over-abundance of material written and published on the subject. Yet, when we looked for material aimed at those who work with offenders with a history of substance abuse, we found the search quite difficult and the results seriously wanting, there was little coverage of a number of important topics. In sum, we just could not find consistent, focused in-depth coverage of the problems of substance abusing offenders and those who work with them.

We did learn that community-based drug treatment programs often resist treating offenders. Ironically, too, we found that since the mid 1970s, the criminal justice community had resisted treatment programs aimed at rehabilitating offenders with a history of substance abuse. But, as evidenced by recent state and federal treatment initiatives, such as the advent of drug courts across the country in recent years, the pendulum has begun to swing back toward efforts to rehabilitate substance abusing offenders.

Research tells us that approximately three-quarters of all prison inmates have a history of substance abuse. Recent research demonstrates that effective treatment of inmates with such a history is associated with reduced reoffending. Because control and treatment of substance abusing offenders is central to community safety and well being, and because we could not locate a newsletter or

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From the Field

The Kyle New Vision Program: An Intensive In-Prison Therapeutic Community

by Shirley H. Livingston and Dorothy M. Seaton

Intensive IPTC Pays Off for High-Risk Substance Abusing Offenders

The Kyle Correctional Center located 25 miles south of Austin, Texas, in the small Texas hill country community of Kyle, houses the New Vision In-Prison Therapeutic Community (IPTC) Drug Treatment Program. Operated by Wackenhut Corrections Corporation, the New Vision Program is a nine-to-12 month program that has been in operation since May 1992. When the Texas Criminal Justice Treatment Initiative—viewed as a farsighted and progressive attempt to break the crime and drug connection and the high recidivism rates for criminal drug and alcohol abusers—was signed into law in 1991, New Vision was the first IPTC in Texas and, at that time, it was the largest in the U.S. All 520 beds are dedicated to chemical dependency treatment residents.

All residents admitted into the New Vision program are received from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and must meet the appropriate admission requirements to ensure they are physically and mentally able to handle the stressors involved in the

program. Various screening and assessment tools are used to ensure each resident is appropriate for the program and all information is available to formulate an effective individual treatment plan.

Research has shown that intensive IPTC programs such as the one at Kyle are most effective with higher-risk offenders, those with more severe crime and drug or alcohol-related problems. Repeat offenders with a long history of drug or alcohol abuse and often with no prior chemical dependency treatment also respond well to the more intensive, long-term intervention provided by the Texas Treatment Initiative.

Kyle IPTC graduates, particularly those who completed the aftercare program, have a much lower relapse and recidivism rate than inmates who did not receive IPTC treatment. A Texas Christian University study (Knight, Hiller, & Simpson, 1999) reported that 75% of Kyle graduates who also complete the residential aftercare program were *not* returned to prison within three years; this was significantly better than the untreated

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comparison group with 58% who remained out of prison. Clearly, completing IPTC, transition treatment center (TTC) programs, and aftercare was a strong foundation for breaking the prison/addiction cycle and building a life of freedom and sobriety for the Kyle graduates. The positive effects of treatment often "trickle down" to the graduates' families, co-workers, and neighbors after their release from prison and completion of the aftercare program, providing lasting benefits to Texas communities in terms of reducing the need for ongoing social services and law enforcement costs to the taxpayers.

Of interest, the TCU study also reports that, "To optimize and demonstrate its effectiveness, the referral process (including judges, prisons, and parole boards) must become systematic and disciplined, and evaluations should improve by focusing on issues that translate into policy decisions." (p. 350) When screening and selection of program participants is done to provide these services to the appropriate clients, the results can be dramatic, and inspiring.

Intensive In-Prison Program Follows Participants to Outside World

IPTC treatment at Kyle New Vision is followed by mandatory participation in community-based TTCs providing up to three months of residential treatment and 12 months of non-residential treatment (aftercare).

75% of Kyle graduates who also complete the residential aftercare program were not returned to prison within three years.

The New Vision program is a three-phase intensive treatment program. Progression from one phase to another is based upon an individual demonstrating effective functioning in treatment. Residents enter the Therapeutic Community (TC) in the Orientation Phase and proceed through each phase of treatment by successful completion of treatment task, learning activities, and staff recommendation. The phase system is a developmental system in which each of the phases represents improvements in the resident's assumption of personal responsibilities and accomplishments of constructive behavior changes.

Orientation Phase. The Orientation Phase is designed to acquaint the resident with the basic concept and philosophies utilized within the TC including rules, tools, regulations, policies, and structure of the hierarchy. The resident assimilates into the community through full participation and involvement in all activities. The resident is introduced to the concepts of substance abuse and the addiction process, relapse, relapse

prevention, denial, and development of the individual treatment plan. A participant's understanding of the basic concept of the TC is demonstrated by the resident successfully passing the Orientation Mastery Test.

Main Treatment Phase. The Main Treatment Phase is focused on both exploration of the problems faced by the resident in recovery and options for their solution. The resident continues to learn the process of addiction and recovery. He also begins to identify the deficiencies in his life skills which have made it difficult to deal with stress-producing life situations. The resident begins to learn to accept responsibility for his behavior and begins to recognize new self-management strategies with less reliance on authority. Socialization, personal growth, and psychological awareness are pursued through all of the therapeutic and community activities.

Re-Entry Phase. The Re-Entry Phase provides a period for the resident to solidify changes from earlier work into lasting habits, which help maintain recovery from his chemical dependency. While preparing for discharge and parole, careful attention is placed on the development of a comprehensive relapse prevention plan and continuum of care plan that includes follow-up aftercare, employment, housing, sponsors, peer support groups, and other community resources. Family issues, relationships, and transition processes are areas of focus during the Re-Entry phase. Continuous empha-

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sis is placed on increasing self-esteem and family values, and the development of social and personal growth skills that aid in the resident's readiness for transition.

Cadre. A fourth part of treatment in the New Vision program is the Cadre. The Cadre is a small group of up to 20 resident peers who have successfully completed all three phases of primary treatment. Cadre is voluntary for those who do well in the program and have a long sentence. They have demonstrated through positive, constructive, and responsible behavior their motivation and knowledge of the therapeutic community. Cadre members are peer facilitators who serve as role models and assist in the facilitation of group activities under the direct supervision of counseling staff.

The Therapeutic Community Approach

The New Vision Program provides all the basic elements of a TC: a structured daily schedule of activities, a hierarchical community government structure, community enhancement activities, educational seminars and lectures, therapeutic groups, individual and group counseling, Twelve-Step Fellowships, work and academic/vocational education. The program takes a holistic approach to chemical dependency treatment. Chemical dependency is viewed as a problem of the whole person. Problems may include thinking processes, value identification, occupational and/or educational functioning, and interpersonal skills as well as spiritual and moral issues.

The disease model of addiction, which includes physiological, psychological, and social factors, states that substance abuse has a cause, a course, a predictable outcome, and is progressive. Recovery is viewed in the same manner with a cause, a course, a progression, and a predictable outcome. It is important to recognize that recovery involves more than abstinence. It encompasses learning how to live joyfully as a responsible and productive member of the community. Effective role modeling, full-time program continuity, and maintenance are facilitated by the use of experienced residents in key positions of responsibility. The New Vision program is a comprehensive program of recovery within the highly structured regimen of the TC.

Primary Goals. The primary goal of the New Vision program is to provide residents

Kyle's Success a Proven Possibility

In 1994 two Texas prison inmates graduated from the Kyle New Vision Center drug treatment program, a comprehensive, highly structured In-Prison Therapeutic Community (IPTC) run by Wackenhut Corrections Corporation. Both men went on to complete the required post-release inpatient and outpatient aftercare components. However, finding a job was weighing heavily on the minds of both men. They went on job search after job search, finally finding employment washing cars at a local carwash. This was not the perfect job for either man; one had almost completed the credits needed to graduate from college. But both men were dedicated to staying clean and sober and free, and realized that they needed to establish a positive employment record as ex-offenders. Both men worked hard at their jobs and their recovery. Each man found a sponsor, and began establishing a sober support system in the community. When they completed the residential aftercare program, they remained at the car wash. Eventually they received promotions and now the two men who started out washing cars run the car wash. One is manager of the car wash, and the other is manager of the detail shop. Both men eventually married. One married a graduate from another IPTC in Texas; his wife is currently working to start her own business. The couple is very active in Narcotics Anonymous (NA) and their home group. The other married, and he and his wife have adopted four "unwanted, at-risk" children. He started an NA group in the small town where he lives with his wife and children. Both men freely return to the Kyle New Vision Center on a volunteer basis any time they are asked. They happily share their experience in recovery and life with the current residents to show that treatment can be the start of a whole new life.

In 1998, a graduate from the Kyle IPTC program stated, as he was walking out the back door, "I'll be back every year to share with the guys." We have heard this before, but most who leave the program lack the commitment to follow up a year later. Approximately 10

months later the man called and said that he had been accepted in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Approved Partner's Program, a program that allows ex-offenders to return to TDCJ units six months after they are released to volunteer in Twelve Step meetings. He let us know that his one-year anniversary was near, and that he wanted to return to speak at the Saturday night Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meeting. One year from his release he came to speak at AA, and he brought his grown son, whom he had not raised because of his addiction. He shared his story with over 120 residents who were currently in treatment on this unit. He talked about his goal to go to college; he had received his GED while in treatment on the same unit in 1998. In August 2000 we received another call from him, asking to come back on his second anniversary. This time he had to ride the bus halfway across the state because he did not have dependable transportation. He asked if he could bring his brother, from whom he had been separated for nearly 10 years. Again, he shared his experience, strength, and hope with over 120 men. This time he informed the Kyle "family" that he is enrolled in college studying psychology. This 50-year-old man who could barely read and write prior to completing the IPTC program is now a college student.

Are these success stories of a prison-based treatment program? You bet! They range from men going to school when there was no hope of education, to men becoming heads of companies and becoming tax-paying citizens when they could not stay sober to hold a job before treatment. They are stories of men becoming new fathers, men reuniting with long-lost children, men who have learned to be responsible fathers, and husbands and sons and citizens who never knew what those words meant. They are stories about graduates of the Kyle New Vision IPTC.

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an avenue through the community to develop the attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary to lead a responsible, drug-free lifestyle. The program provides a system in which such changes, leading to effective drug-free functioning by the resident, may best be facilitated. Effective functioning is defined as:

- Assumption of personal responsibility for one's own feelings and behaviors;
- Demonstration of the ability to initiate and continue satisfactory interpersonal relationships; and
- Acquisition of the skills necessary to secure and maintain productive employment.

Individual counseling is provided to each resident on a regular basis, although the primary focus of the TC is group counseling and client-driven group/community interaction.

The program is resident-driven with staff support and guidance. The TC is composed of resident peer groups and counseling staff which constitute the community or family, with the staff being the ultimate authority in each community.

Hierarchy. The hierarchy structure is a designated component of the stratified community structure. Peers are members of the community, led by staff. Together this represents "the family" as community. Residents are responsible for the total operation of the community. Work assignments represent job functions or positions within the structure board and are arranged in a hierarchal structure. Jobs higher on the structure board represent more responsibility and are awarded according to individual progress and productivity. The structure board is composed of hierarchical job functions with upward or downward mobility determined by the resident's attitude and behavior. Positions on the structure board are filled through the application process and staff review and assignment. New residents enter a structure with opportunities for upward mobility. Job assignments begin with the most menial task (service crew) and move vertically to levels of coordination and management (Coordinator, Team Leaders, and TOPS members). The social organization depicts the basic aspect of the TC's rehabilitative approach to mutual self-help, work as therapy, peers as role models, and staff as the ultimate authority.

Critical Program Components

Community Enhancement Activities. Community enhancement activities assist the resident with assimilation into the community. These include the morning (AM) meeting, evening (PM) meeting, and community meetings. The meetings provide an important opportunity to motivate the group, process and share information, and reinforce the sense of community and its structure. In addition, didactic educational programs on a wide variety of recovery topics are considered an integral part of the overall treatment provided in the TC. Tutorial as well as small and large group instruction are utilized to provide a variety of methods to accommodate learning styles and modalities. Training or teaching sessions are con-

ducted in an informational format on the various aspects of substance abuse and treatment. The major focus is on personal growth concepts, job skills training, clinical skills training, and substance abuse education. Seminars and lectures are held daily.

Counseling Groups. The counseling groups are face-to-face interactions between residents and counselors that help residents identify, understand, and resolve the issues and problems of substance abuse and life. These groups include encounter groups, confrontation groups, agenda groups, process groups, skills training, peer support groups, affirmation groups, and peer review processes. Individual counseling is provided to each resident on a regular basis, although the primary focus of the TC is group counseling and client-driven group/community interaction.

Community-Clinical Management. Community-clinical management provides for a treatment environment that is physically and emotionally safe. Security staff play an integral role in ensuring that acting out behaviors from a "prison mentality" are not allowed to threaten the safety of the community. The objective is to protect the community as a whole and to strengthen it as a safe and wholesome environment for social learning.

Incentives and Privileges. Incentives and privileges are earned rewards that reflect and reinforce the value of earned achievement. Privileges are earned based on positive and

productive involvement in the treatment process. As the resident progresses through each phase of treatment, privileges are earned along with added responsibilities.

System of Sanctions. There also is a system of sanctions awaiting those who choose to stray outside the boundaries of acceptable behavior. Consequences for inappropriate behavior are designed to reinforce prosocial attitudes and behaviors. To address behavior on a routine basis residents utilize the pull-up system. The pull-up system allows staff and residents to formally or informally address another resident's negative behavior within the family structure. Pull-ups are a method by which a resident is made aware of negative behaviors or attitudes. They are designed to increase his awareness of the behavior, help him become accountable for actions and behaviors, reinforce positive attitudes and promote the benefits of mutual self-help. There are two types of pull-ups, verbal and written. The type of pull-up depends on the inappropriate behavior to be addressed. A pull-up is a personal therapeutic tool used to assist residents in developing responsibility for personal actions. Negative behaviors are also addressed by the treatment group/family in encounter groups, and in treatment team staffings that include staff from security, education, treatment, and sometimes medical, along with the treatment resident himself.

Twelve-Step Fellowships. Twelve-Step Fellowships are used as a voluntary reinforcement of the principles presented in mandatory treatment groups and lectures. The various Twelve-Step self-help groups (Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Secular Organizations for Sobriety, and Adult Children of Alcoholics) assist in strengthening the resident's commitment to recovery and help build a bridge to the "free world" in terms of seeking and receiving healthy peer support resources. Volunteers from the recovery fellowships in the local outside community provide weekly speakers and meeting facilitators for the various Twelve-Step meetings held in the unit and attended on a voluntary basis by the residents.

Volunteer Programs. The Kyle unit has one of the finest volunteer programs in any TDCJ unit in the state. We received recognition for the Best Utilization of Volunteers in 1998 and 1999. Our volunteer pool is over 200 strong. There are two speaker meetings each week at the Kyle unit, Thursday night NA and Saturday night AA. Each week there are at least three Spanish-speaking AA volunteers at the Sunday night Spanish AA

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meeting. Monday night Big Book Study has a volunteer facilitator at each meeting. We have no shortage of volunteers. People call asking if they can please come out to one of the fellowship meetings because they have heard from friends what a wonderful experience it is to meet the residents and share their recovery stories and experiences with them. Volunteers usually leave with one question: When can I come back? The residents of the New Vision program get a lot from volunteers, but volunteers also get inspiration from our residents. The meetings are as close to free-world meetings as possible in the institutional setting. Meetings and volunteers are coordinated by staff and a unit steering committee comprised of resident volunteers from each cell block.

Academic and Vocational Education. The Kyle Correctional Center also provides academic and vocational education. The primary purpose of the basic academic program is to help residents develop skills in reading, written communication, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as to prepare them for a positive transition into society with adequate skills and confidence. Academic classes include Adult Basic Education (ABE), Pre-GED, GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Life Skills. Any resident without a GED or high school diploma is placed in academic school when he is admitted to the treatment

program. Vocational classes providing important basic office technology skills are provided to teach residents the job skills needed to find and hold marketable employment upon release. The program provides innovative individualized learning experiences to foster the resident's growth as a citizen, worker, and consumer. The value of education instilled in prison can be the key to future education and personal growth beyond a resident's wildest dreams.

Family Counseling Program. Another important component with the New Vision Program is the family counseling program. Family counseling services are provided to each program participant and his family, whenever possible. Family counseling services are offered on weekends and by scheduled appointment for interested family members throughout the resident's program stay. The family therapist conducts family issues groups and education services weekly as an integral part of the holistic approach to recovery at the center.

Program Enhancements. The New Vision Program provides a number of enhancements, which accompany the treatment process. Special activities, holiday programs, organized recreational sports, community service projects, contests and talent shows are scheduled to promote creativity, to enhance team building and community pride, and to improve communication skills. Also, New Vision routinely recognizes the achievements, talents and accomplishments of the TC participants.

Upon successful completion of the New Vision Program, residents participate in a monthly transition celebration. The term "transition celebration" is used to more appropriately indicate the completion of one stage of recovery and transition to the next phase. A Certificate of Completion and New Vision "Sobriety Chip," inscribed with the serenity prayer, are awarded to each resident completing the TC program. During the transition celebration residents who have completed educational or vocational courses are also recognized. Just as the name denotes, the New Vision Program provides each resident with an opportunity to rebuild and restructure his life with a new outlook, a new destiny, and on a new path to recovery.

In conclusion, the New Vision Program is making a difference. Through IPTC treatment, men are overcoming their drug use problems and successfully reentering society.

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